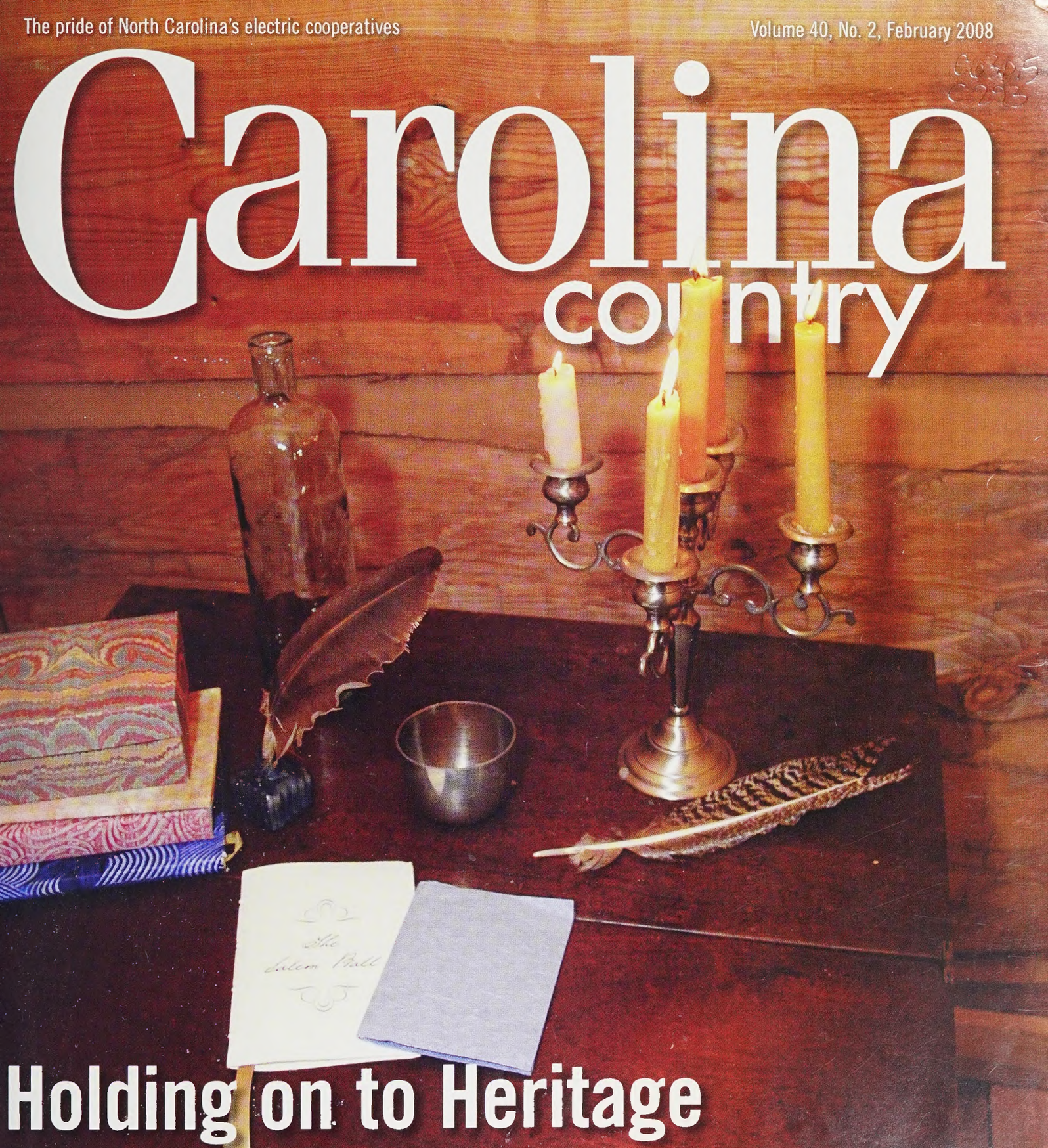
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 40, No. 2, February 2008

Carolina country



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INSIDE:

- Restoring Rural Hill
- Mules make a comeback
- The CCC Boys
- The working world

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Where Can You Save Energy at Home?—See pages 14–15

Watering chores, water bills! Sweating behind a roaring mower! Spraying poison chemicals and digging weeds...

...you can end such lawn drudgery – here's how!

Amazoy is the Trade Mark registered U.S. Patent Office for our Meyer Zoysia Grass.

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7 Ways Your Zoysia Grass Lawn Saves You Time, Work, and Money!

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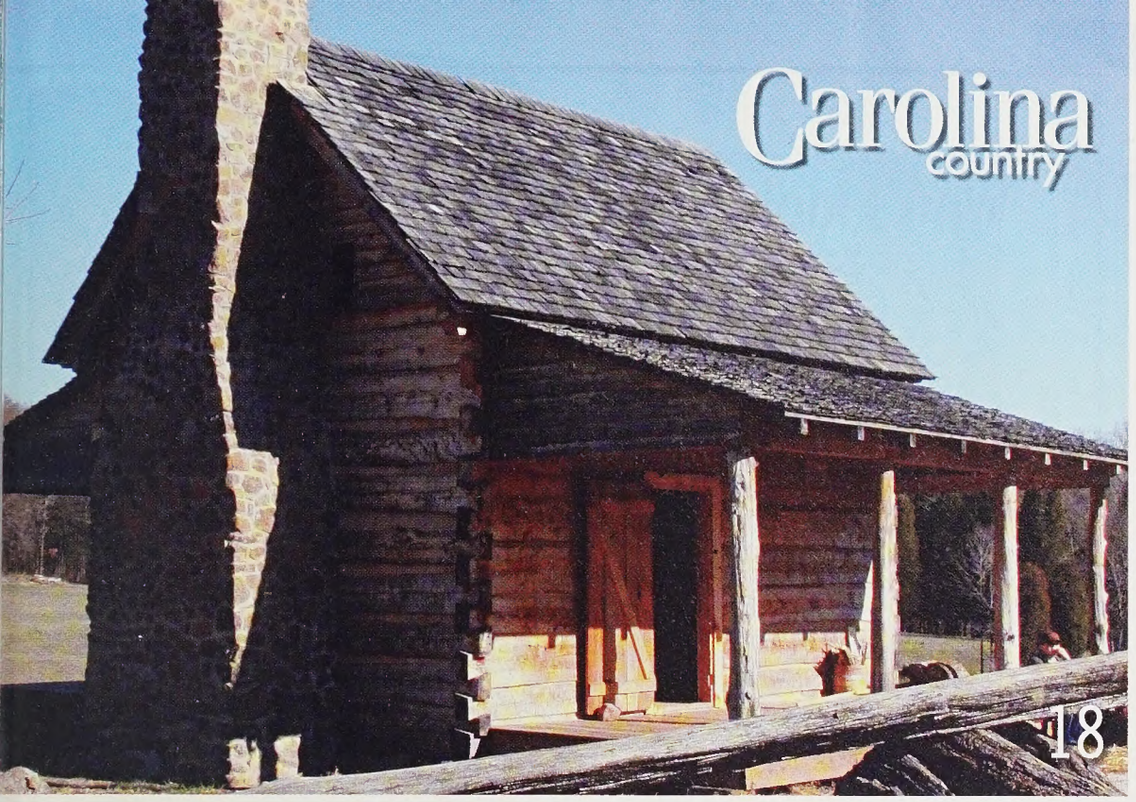

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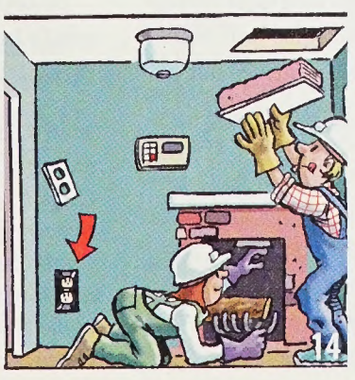
Inside Rural Retreat, a re-creation of the 1760 log cabin of the Davidson family homestead at Rural Hill in Mecklenburg County. See pages 18–19. Photography by James J. Shaffer.



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Carolina country

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?

Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

Who's looking out for you?

By Morris McClelion

As the energy buzz gets louder—rising demand, higher prices, lower carbon emissions, better fuel efficiency, greater energy independence, more renewable energy—you might wonder, "Who is looking out for us?"

As the "expert advice" comes at you from all sides—efficient appliances, "green" products, energy tax credits, hybrid vehicles—you might be asking yourself, "Who can we trust?"

In North Carolina and across the U.S., electric cooperatives for more than 60 years have worked as a network in your favor. The electric cooperative utility that you own operates with only you in mind and always has.

Electric cooperatives naturally conduct business for the benefit of their consumer-members. Cooperatives are not organized to make a profit, but instead to deliver a reliable and affordable service to their members. Even in today's complex energy climate, our purpose remains unchanged.

Cooperatives always combine resources not only to run our businesses most efficiently, but also to make things happen.

As state and federal governments enact legislation affecting the energy we deliver and the environment around us, your local cooperative representatives routinely visit legislative and executive offices to help policymakers understand how the issues affect real people: taxes, increased regulations and mandates, local business development, and cost implications of new technologies and standards. Simply put, cooperatives act as your advocate in the energy arena.

Your cooperative continually trains employees to understand not only how electricity works for you, but also what new services can help you as a consumer. If you see a "green" product or an energy-saving service that promises to cut your energy bill more than any other, your electric cooperative can supply straight answers about how well these investments really work and whether it will work for you.

Because we always have been involved with improving the quality of life in our communities, cooperatives care about using energy resources wisely in order to leave a cleaner world for our children. That's why you'll also see co-ops involved in project demonstrations that help explain how the generation and consumption of electricity really work. We are involved with realistic solar and wind energy investments, truly efficient appliances, effective energy-saving measures you can count on, as well as how to use electricity safely and more efficiently.

As long as cooperatives have been in the business of supplying you with reliable, affordable energy, we have provided you with the information behind the business. Carolina Country magazine, your co-op's newsletter and Web site, and information supplied with your monthly bill regularly keep you up to date on issues affecting your cooperative and your electricity costs. We also keep open relationships with news media statewide, local civic organizations, businesses, farmers, schools, churches and municipal governments to help them understand our issues as well. Communicating has always been a priority among cooperatives. And that works both ways: cooperatives are utilities that listen to those they serve.

In today's maze of energy issues, who's looking out for you? Your cooperative, that's who.

Morris McClelion is CEO and general manager of Central Electric Membership Corporation, the Touchstone Energy cooperative serving more than 19,000 members in Chatham, Harnett, Lee, and parts of Moore and Randolph counties. He also is president of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Feb. 7 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our March issue, will receive $25.

January winner:
The January photo by Harry Caison of Emerald Isle showed commercial fishing boats tied up at Atlantic's harbor, Carteret County. Correct answers were numbered, and the $25 winner chosen at random was Julius Morris of Atlantic, a member of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative. Mr. Morris also sent this comment: "They are two pound net skiffs located at the Atlantic harbor of Refuge. These two boats have been used for years to haul nets and fish in the pound net fishery. Pound net fishing is a passive form of fishing used by locals today and dating back to the local Native Americans. These two boats are owned and still in operation by local fisherman John Hudnall. The serene picture in no way depicts the hard work, long hours and rough seas that these boats and their crews endure."

What children will say!

When our granddaughter, Gabi, was 4 years old, she came out of her Sunday School class carrying a paper plate with torn paper and a cup glued on it, representing the Last Supper. When asked what she had learned in class, Gabi replied, "I learned that Jesus ate the last sucker!"

Tony and Sheryl Poplstein, Huntersville, EnergyUnited

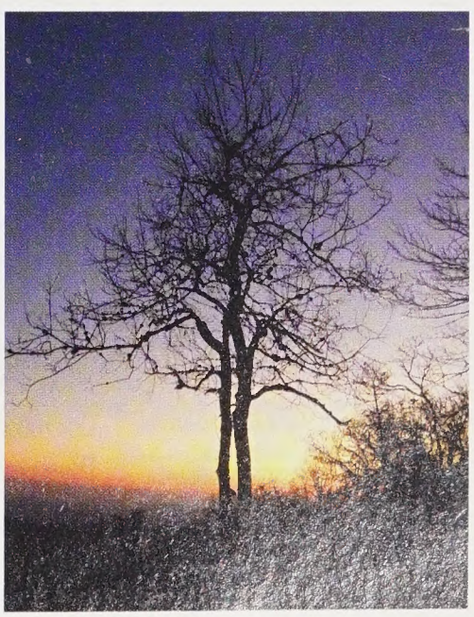
My 5-year-old son asked when his infant brother's extension cord was going to fall off.

As my sister was telling her 4-year-old son to pray for his "Big Mama" because she had Bell's palsy, he asked what that was. She described it to him and put her hand over one side of her face to show that her face wouldn't move, and she said, "Big Mama looks like this." He wanted to know how long Big Mama would have to keep her hand over her face.

Sara Sealey, Cumberland County, South River EMC

Trees

This picture of a winter tree in Randolph County was made by Eddie Hough, one of our correspondents from Asheboro. He is disabled and works from a wheelchair. Among other skills, he taught himself photography and how to develop and print photographs.



This picture of a tree at dusk was made by Katherine Marx and Robert Crowell of Boone. It is a view from the Moses Cone property overlooking the town of Blowing Rock.

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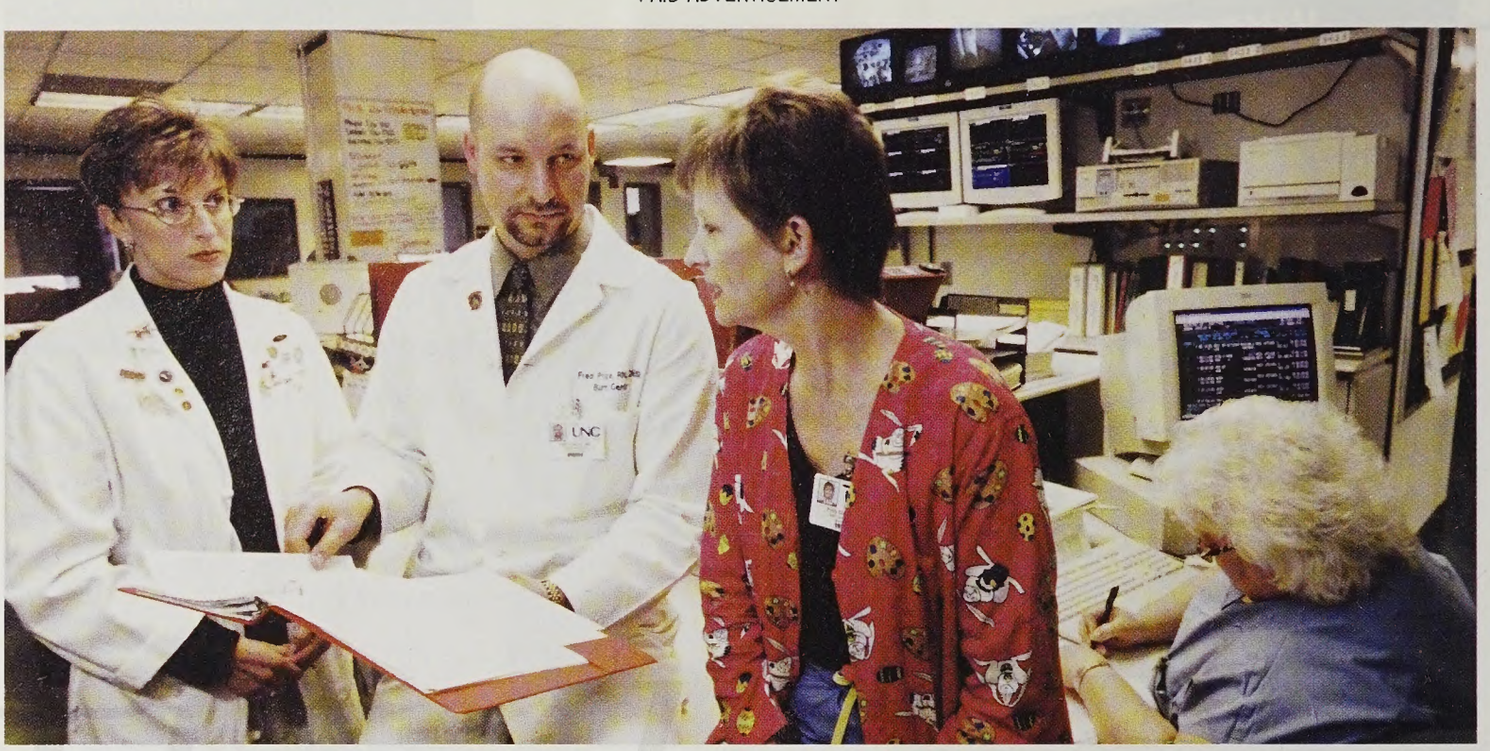

Thanks to those who care about the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of North Carolina hosted a golf tournament in October 2007 that raised more than $94,000 for the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center's "Learn Not to Burn" program. The program sends specialists to make presentations to schools, fire departments, senior citizens, Jaycees and other community organizations. Many serious injuries and fatalities are prevented each year because children and adults learn not to burn.

"This program is truly about the kids," said tournament chair Dale Lambert, EVP of Randolph EMC, Asheboro. "When fires do occur, children should know how to respond."

Listed here are the major donors to the golf tournament and other fundraisers supporting the cause. The cooperatives also are grateful to the many other businesses and individuals who contributed to the success of the tournament.

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NC Zoo

Randolph EMC connects solar electric arrays at N.C. Zoo

Randolph EMC in December interconnected the largest solar electric system in North Carolina to its electrical grid. The three new photovoltaic, roof-mounted solar arrays, measuring 75 by 40 feet each, are located near the North America entrance of the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro.

The electricity generated flows directly into Randolph EMC's system. The zoo is likely to use much of the power ultimately, given its electrical demand and close proximity.

In most places, solar electric technology is not profitable to build on a large scale unless backed by subsidies. Randolph EMC will purchase the power produced by the project at a price equivalent to the avoided cost of wholesale power under a contract with Carolina Solar Energy, which developed the project. Carolina Solar Energy, based in Durham, will receive an additional subsidy of 18 cents per kilowatt-hour under a renewable energy certificate contract with NC GreenPower, a nonprofit organization in Raleigh that promotes alternative energy. BB&T Equipment Finance Corp. is financing the solar system with a 5-year, $847,000 lease, according to Richard Harkrader, owner of Carolina Solar Energy.

Harkrader, a leading solar developer in the state, estimates that the 104-kilowatt solar system's annual production will be 130,000 kilowatt-hours per year, or enough power for 11 to 13 houses at average use in North Carolina. Harkrader faced hurdles over insurance, making the solar tax credits feasible and other issues during the four-year project, but says the next project will be easier. "The way to get solar prices down is to build the businesses and infrastructure here (in North Carolina) so we have companies that can economically meet solar demand," he says.

Randolph EMC, the Touchstone Energy cooperative that serves the zoo and surrounding counties, supports development of practical, renewable energy technology. "This project represents Randolph EMC's commitment to explore new technologies and work with private industry to develop solutions for alternative energy resources," said Fred Smith, key accounts manager at the cooperative, based in Asheboro.

"It took a lot of innovation, and we're happy that we've all come together in this collaborative project," says Mary Joan Pugh, chief of staff at the zoo. Three new picnic pavilions are underneath the solar arrays. The zoo, which has won awards for its ongoing environmental practices, plans a live readout display that shows visitors how much power the solar system is generating.

NC Zoo

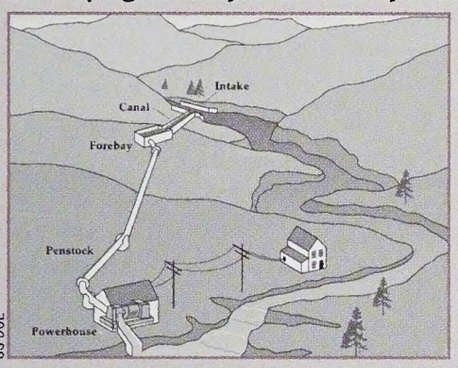
The three new solar arrays at the North Carolina Zoo are complete and generating power. One array and shelter is obscured in this view.

Pugh said she appreciated Randolph EMC's willingness to break new ground. The zoo relied on the co-op's technical expertise, she said. "Randolph EMC is great. When we have an idea, they're always willing to listen to us."

—Karen Olson House

Try This!

Developing small hydroelectric systems



US DOE

Q: I am in the process of designing a series of small ponds on my property. Since I live on the side of a mountain, I was wondering if there was an opportunity to install a mini turbine and generate electrical power with the fall I will have. Do you have information on mini turbines and are there programs available for projects such as this?

Henry Wren, Hayesville, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC

A: North Carolina residents can learn about renewable energy and the available North Carolina resources from the Raleigh based not-for-profit organization NC GreenPower at www.ncgreenpower.org.

NC GreenPower offers the following information. "The power of water is already used in hydroelectric plants to generate electricity. Recently more people have been using water on a smaller scale to generate electricity without the problems and costs involved with fossil fuels or large dams. Small-scale water power is one of the most environmentally friendly ways to make electricity.

"Hydro power uses the form of falling water (gravity) to produce useful power. This falling water is directed through a turbine, causing it to spin. The spinning turbine is coupled to a generator, which produces energy. Small-scale hydro systems offer several advantages. The generation process produces no pollution. It doesn't require a large dam or reservoir; some systems can be powered by only a small stream. So a little bit of water goes a long way."

The site also contains an 8-page technical bulletin on "Small Hydropower Systems," produced for the U.S. Department of Energy.

The North Carolina Solar Center maintains a database of incentives that states provide to developers of renewable energy projects at www.dsireusa.org.

The following Web site offers a database of renewable energy professionals: www.greenprofessionals.org.

If you are interested in pursuing a small-scale hydroelectric project, you also should contact your electric cooperative to discuss issues related to interconnecting with the power system.

Thanks to the TSE Services division of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation for source information.

Can you help others save energy?

Send your conservation ideas or questions to us.
P.O.Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611, or E-mail: editor@carolinacountry.com

The new federal energy bill leaves issues for future legislation

Congress mandated major increases in fuel efficiency and increased use of biofuels in the 2007 energy bill signed into law in December. But Congress left many electricity issues for future legislation, and electric cooperatives will work to educate both national and state elected officials in 2008.

An increase in automobile fuel efficiency standards was the centerpiece of the bill. The Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards had not been raised in decades, and the proposal had bipartisan support. The legislation also increases the nationwide biofuels standard to 36 billion gallons, from the current 4.7 billion gallons, by 2022.

To gain passage of the energy bill, Congress ultimately dropped most of the bill's electricity mandates and tax incentives. The House of Representatives originally passed a bill requiring investor-owned utilities to generate 15 percent of their electricity from new renewable energy resources. Electric cooperatives were exempt from the mandate. The renewable energy provision, though, could not garner the necessary votes to pass the Senate, and the provisions were dropped from the bill. Many expect debate on renewable energy mandates to continue in the next few years.

Renewable energy resources vary widely among the states, and many members of Congress believe that renewable energy mandates are best accomplished at the state level. At present, wind power is the most plentiful renewable energy resource, but there is little accessible wind energy in the Southeast, including North Carolina. A national renewable energy mandate could adversely impact the Southeast due to the region's relatively low access to renewable resources.

Earlier in 2007, electric cooperatives supported legislation in the North Carolina General Assembly establishing a state mandate for renewable energy. The legislation recognized the specific challenges facing North Carolina in establishing a renewable energy policy. North Carolina's renewable energy policy will stimulate local development of the state's limited resources. The bill also contained provisions to help limit the consumer rate impact of renewable energy mandates.

Due to concerns over cost in the 2007 federal energy bill, the Senate also dropped major tax provisions. Previously existing tax incentives for the generation of wind, solar, geothermal and other renewable electricity have expired and were not reauthorized.

The legislation does authorize more federal research into renewable energy technology and carbon capture and sequestration technology (CC&S). CC&S is a key component of any future efforts to reduce the nation's carbon emissions. Many of the bill's supporters see carbon reduction as the main tool for resolving climate change. For these major federal research initiatives to succeed, they must receive full Congressional funding appropriations bills.

As Congress continues to work on renewable electricity policy and climate change legislation, North Carolina's cooperatives will advocate legislation that balances costs and benefits for consumers, and that is based on proven technology and protects the nation's economy.

—Andrew Meehan, N.C. Assn. of Electric Cooperatives

POWER UP

Electric utilities are combining new construction and efficient technology to meet the growing demand for energy

By Jennifer Taylor

Will our nation's electric system continue to provide a reliable, safe and affordable supply of power in coming years? This question was asked most recently by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), a Princeton, N.J.-based non-profit organization charged with monitoring America's power system reliability.

In October 2007, NERC published its annual Long-Term Reliability Assessment, which provides a forecast on how much electric generating capacity will be available during the next decade. The report also estimates how much electricity people will use over that time.

The organization's findings revealed that current plans to build power plants and high-voltage transmission lines lag behind the expected growth in power consumption. They also match a U.S. Department of Energy forecast that demand for electricity nationally will increase by 40 percent during the next 22 years. Even if the country can dramatically increase efficiency and conservation programs—electricity demand over time will continue to grow as our economy and population grow.

NERC warned, "Demand for electricity is expected to increase over the next 10 years by approximately 18 percent in the United States, but confirmed generation capacity currently identified will increase by only 8.5 percent; expansion and strengthening of the transmission system [also] continues to lag demand growth and expansion of generating resources in most areas."

To fully grasp the impact of that statement, consider these facts about generation, transmission, and the demand for electricity:

- Electricity can't be stored—it must be used immediately and flow continuously. Electric energy generated at a power plant flows through high-voltage transmission lines to substations, where it is reduced to a lower voltage for safe distribution to homes and businesses. Reliability refers to the availability of electricity when and where consumers need it, without interruption.

- Not every power plant generates electricity all of the time. Across the country on any given day, it is normal for numerous plants to be shut down due to a broad range of issues, such as scheduled maintenance, fuel availability or price, or low water levels at a dam where a hydroelectric power plant operates.

■ Renewable energy, like wind and solar, holds great promise in providing electricity but has significant limitations for "on call" availability and currently costs more than traditionally fueled generation.

High-voltage transmission lines carrying electricity from generating plants to distribution substations need regular and emergency maintenance. Vegetation management to clear rights-of-way, or weather events, such as ice storms or tornadoes, can interrupt the flow of electricity on these "power highways."

For consumers to receive reliable electric service, a certain amount of reserve capacity must always be available. NERC has stated that generation capacity margins should average 15 percent or more. In other words, available generation should be approximately 15 percent greater than the electricity that consumers are expected to use during times of peak demand —the electric utility industry's equivalent of rush-hour traffic. This helps ensure sufficient power in an emergency or if a specific power plant needs to be shut down for maintenance.

The NERC report also found that even if all power plants under construction now are completed on time and begin generating electricity in the amounts slated, and new construction begins according to plans now underway, generation capacity margins will drop below minimum reliability margin levels in certain areas of the United States within the next five years.

Southeast power needs to rise 24%

Regions affected include California, Rocky Mountain states, New England, Texas, the Southwest and the Midwest. In the Southeast, generation needs are expected to rise by 24 percent over the next 20 years. For our region simply to keep up with growth, we will need approximately 66 new baseload generation plants. These generation plants provide electricity around the clock. North Carolina's electric cooperatives are meeting these growing needs. Two natural gas powered plants have just been completed and are now on line to provide power when you need it most—on cold mornings and hot summer afternoons.

In addition to the generation needs, transmission line capacity (what's needed to deliver the power) is projected to increase by approximately 9 percent in the United States over the next 10 years.

All of this means that a sudden surge in weather-related disruptions or a batch of construction delays could leave consumers facing immediate and recurring disruptions in their supply of electricity.

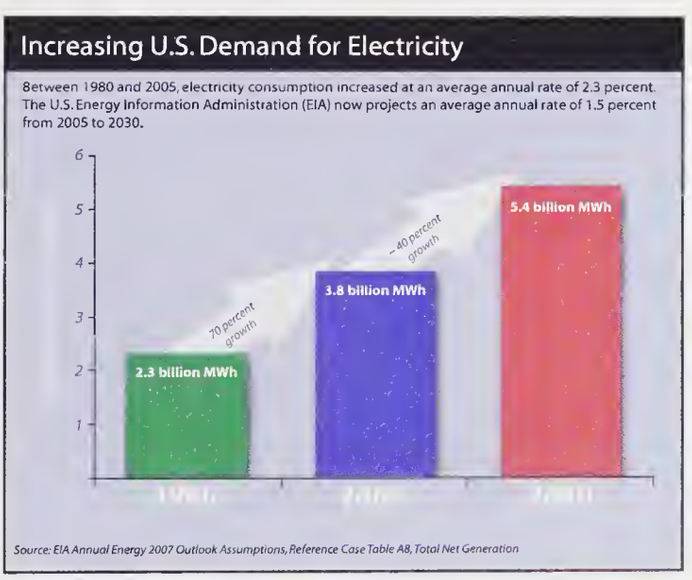
Buddy Creed, board president of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, believes the results of the NERC study highlight the need for national and state lawmakers and regulators to act without delay to help address the challenges of meeting future energy demand.

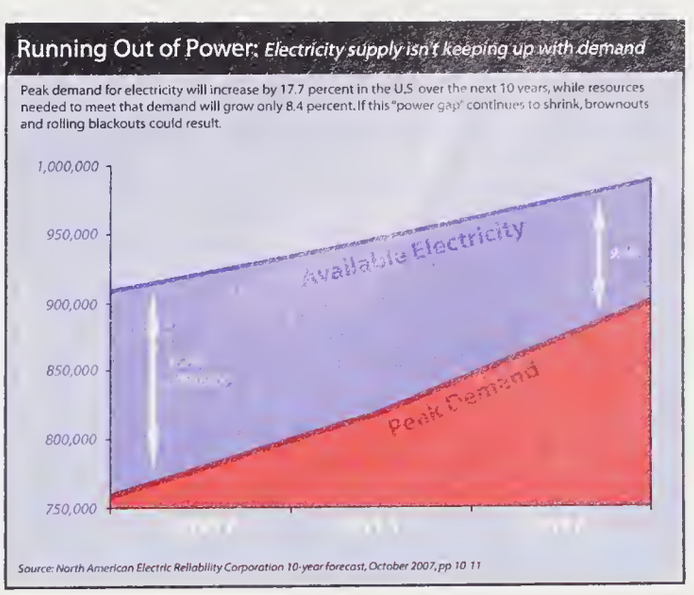
"The generation and transmission needed to supply everyone with electricity will get built," says Creed. "Electric co-ops, as not-for-profit, consumer-owned utilities, have an obligation to serve. The issue is how we manage rising costs associated not only with the fuels needed to produce electricity and construction materials like steel, copper and concrete, but climate change as well. Policymakers must seek out solutions that are feasible technologically and can be sustained economically—remedies that will allow electric co-ops to continue providing reliable, affordable power in an environmentally responsible fashion."

In its report, NERC examines other significant problems that could affect reliability. These include the need to attract well-trained younger workers to replace the aging workforce of electric utility professionals, and how to deal with renewable energy concerns such as intermittency—the fact that wind only blows about 40 percent of the time and generally not on hot, humid weekdays in the summer when power consumption skyrockets, and the sun doesn't shine during nighttime hours.

"Beginning now, start doing everything you can to use electricity wisely," NERC encourages consumers—such as turning off lights when not in use, replacing old appliances and equipment with more energy-efficient models, and managing electricity use carefully.

Jennifer Taylor writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.


Increasing U.S. Demand for Electricity
Between 1980 and 2005, electricity consumption increased at an average annual rate of 2.3 percent. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) now projects an average annual rate of 1.5 percent from 2005 to 2030.
6
5
4
3
2
1
2.3 billion MWh
70 percent growth
3.8 billion MWh
40 percent growth
5.4 billion MWh
Source: EIA Annual Energy 2007 Outlook Assumptions, Reference Case Table A8, Total Net Generation


Running Out of Power: Electricity supply isn't keeping up with demand
Peak demand for electricity will increase by 17.7 percent in the U.S. over the next 10 years, while resources needed to meet that demand will grow only 8.4 percent. If this "power gap" continues to shrink, brownouts and rolling blackouts could result.
1,000,000
950,000
900,000
850,000
800,000
750,000
Available Electricity
Peak Demand
Source: North American Electric Reliability Corporation 10-year forecast, October 2007, pp 10 11

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When you're discouraged, I wish you Hope ...

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When you're troubled, I wish you Peace.

Poem written by
Jerry Knoll ©1983 Abbey Press Poem

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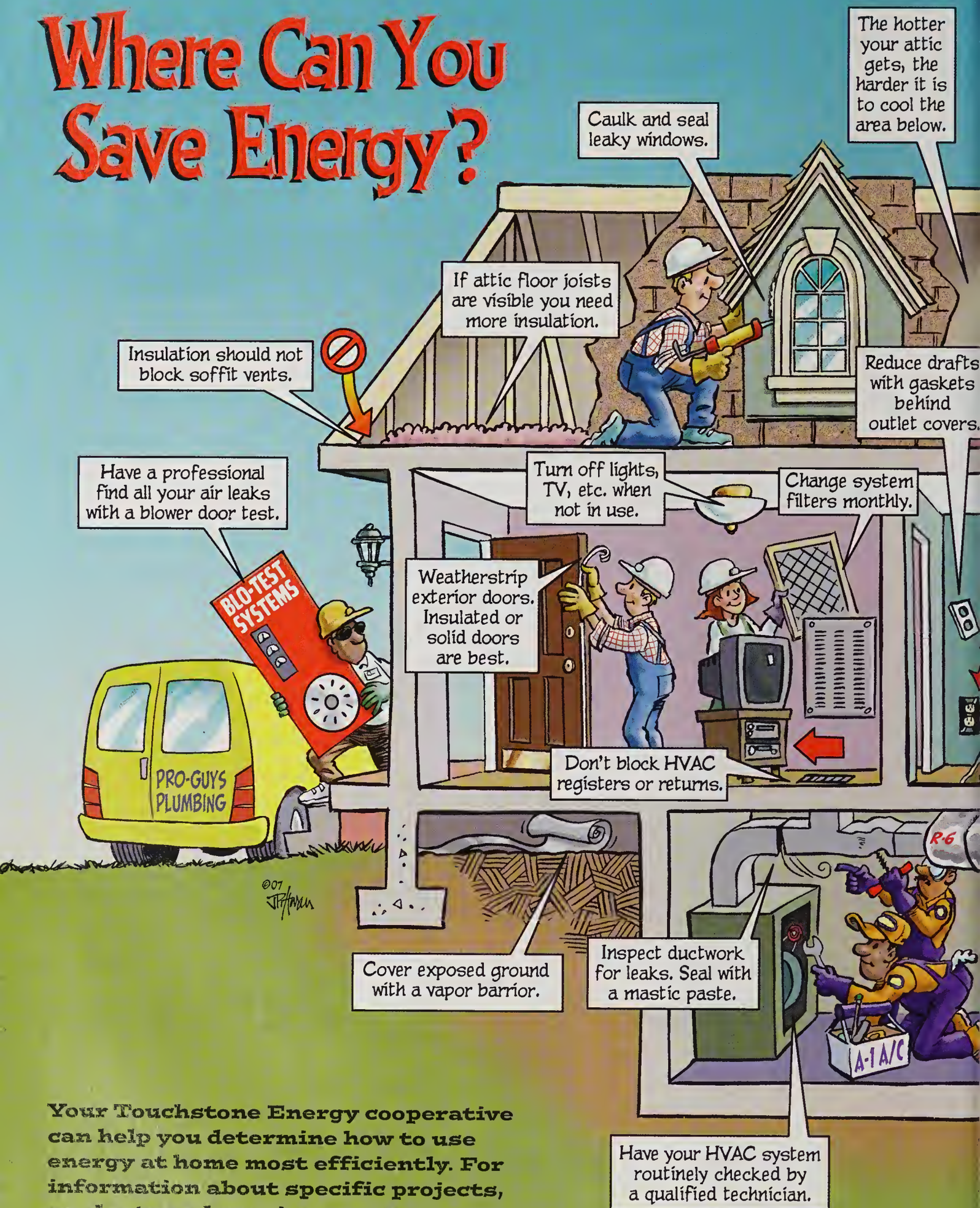
The hotter your attic gets, the harder it is to cool the area below.
Caulk and seal leaky windows.
If attic floor joists are visible you need more insulation.
Insulation should not block soffit vents.
Reduce drafts with gaskets behind outlet covers.
Have a professional find all your air leaks with a blower door test.
Turn off lights, TV, etc. when not in use.
Change system filters monthly.
BLO-TEST SYSTEMS
Weatherstrip exterior doors. Insulated or solid doors are best.
PRO-GUYS PLUMBING
Don't block HVAC registers or returns.
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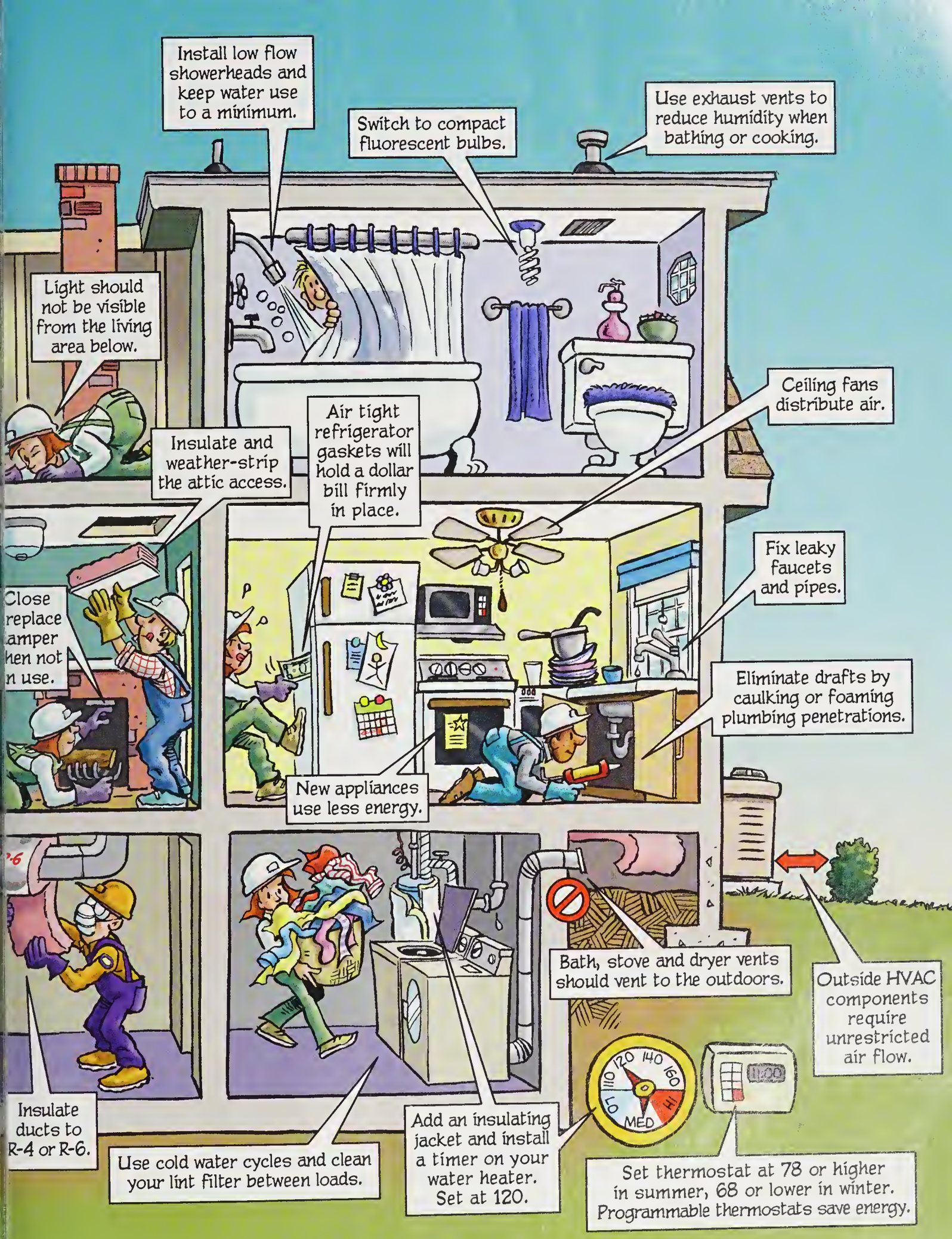
R-6
Cover exposed ground with a vapor barrier.
Inspect ductwork for leaks. Seal with a mastic paste.
A-1 A/C
Have your HVAC system routinely checked by a qualified technician.

Your Touchstone Energy cooperative can help you determine how to use energy at home most efficiently. For information about specific projects, products and services, contact your Touchstone Energy cooperative.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Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs.
Use exhaust vents to reduce humidity when bathing or cooking.
Light should not be visible from the living area below.
Ceiling fans distribute air.
Air tight refrigerator gaskets will hold a dollar bill firmly in place.
Insulate and weather-strip the attic access.
Fix leaky faucets and pipes.
Close replace damper hen not n use.
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New appliances use less energy.
Bath, stove and dryer vents should vent to the outdoors.
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Insulate ducts to R-4 or R-6.
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110
120
140
160
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Illustration by Jackie Pittman

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Rural Hill

A haven of Scottish and Scots-Irish heritage helps an urban area understand its rural roots

By Hannah Miller, Photos by James J. Shaffer

You don't have to wear a kilt to be in step with North Carolina history, but in the southern Piedmont, it doesn't hurt if you do.

The Scots and Scots-Irish immigrants who largely settled the area, many of them following the Great Wagon Road south from Pennsylvania, left a huge imprint on the region. In Mecklenburg County, the seven Presbyterian churches that the pious Scots farmers established by 1770 still thrive, as does their Davidson College, founded in 1837.

"They said everybody had to be able to read the Bible for themselves," says Keets Taylor of the Catawba Valley Scottish Society. "They brought that historical interest in education to this country."

In most cases, their farms have been divided and sold, and now sprout housing developments and highways in this fast-growing region served by the EnergyUnited Touchstone Energy cooperative. But 16 years ago, Mecklenburg County took steps to preserve one such farm, Rural Hill off Neck Road and the Catawba River in north Mecklenburg.

The Davidson Farm

Mecklenburg County would have been hard-pressed to find another farm so drenched in history. This was the 1760 homestead of Maj. John Davidson, a Scots-descended transplant from Pennsylvania who was a leader in the area's pre-Revolution ferment. He is thought to be one of the signers of the controversial Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of June 20, 1775 (many historians doubt its existence) and the generally-accepted Mecklenburg Resolves. Coming 11 days after the Declaration was supposedly proclaimed, the Resolves laid down ground rules for local government that excluded the British.

Davidson, who became a major in the Revolutionary War, lent his horse to his cousin, Gen. William Lee Davidson, only to see it come home riderless after the Battle of Cowans Ford four miles north. The general, for whom Davidson College is named, had been killed in the battle. John Davidson survived the war, and he and his wife Violet prospered at Rural Hill, which eventually was the home of five more generations. In the 1800s, it reached 5,000 acres and was a self-contained community with grist mill, brick-making facility, sawmill, blacksmith shop and schools for white and African American children.

In 1992, the last three direct descendants to live there sold it to Mecklenburg County to be preserved as a historic site. Two years later, the county leased it long-term to the Catawba Valley Scottish Society, with instructions to carry out that mission. With the help of hundreds of volunteers, the society restores and re-creates historic buildings on the site, invites the public in for tours, and sponsors special events highlighting U.S. and Scottish history.

"It's a very major site," says Ed McLean, Rural Hill executive director. "It can be used for interpreting three centuries in this county: the 1700s (homestead), 1800s (plantation) and the 1900s (farm)."

Remnants from all three eras remain: a planting of boxwoods thought to date to the 1700s, columns of the late-1700s plantation house, which burned in 1886, a mid-19th century well house and ash (soap-making) house of plantation-made brick, and the 20th century farmhouse built around the plantation kitchen.

Today's working farm

Rural Hill is a working 21st century farm as well. McLean points out the fields of hay and corn that the society's farm manager, Eddie Ferguson, tends with the help of volunteers. With history in mind, they use farm equipment

from the 1940s and '50s, including a Ford tractor, Allis Chalmers tractor, hay baler and corn picker. Keets Taylor, who preceded McLean as director, says that volunteers have loaded "hundreds and hundreds of bales of hay" over the years.

"We feed 'em good, we treat 'em good," she says. "We give them respect, and lots of chocolate." (EnergyUnited supplies electricity to the farmhouse, where she and others cook for the volunteers.)

The hay feeds more than two dozen Highlands cattle—"Scottish coos" if you were in Scotland—that regard pasture visitors placidly from beneath extra-shaggy brows. (Photo, this page.) After some 17,000 October visitors finish tramping through the Amazing Maize Maze (the farm's cornfield), the corn is stored for the farm's chickens.

Eventually, McLean says, they'll have Durham cattle like the Davidsons raised. "We will have a selection of animals that will be historically correct both to the Scots and to the Davidsons who would have been on this farm."

A corn crib, chicken coop and pole barn are already up. A root cellar is being dug, a blacksmith shop with forge is being created, an herb garden with historic plants is being planned for spring, and another cow barn will be readied for the hoped-for Durham cattle. Long-range plans call for the expansion of the Davidson family museum, now in one room of the farmhouse, into a freestanding cultural center. Last on the plan's wish list is a re-creation of the plantation house.

Volunteers swinging old-fashioned broad axes spent hundreds of hours the last three years building a two-room log cabin typical of those of the 1700s. (Photo, page 18.) "There's not one nail in the walls," proudly says volunteer Roy Pickett. Built in Appalachian, half-dovetail style, it was finished last year. The cabin's chimney and hearth were fashioned from rocks collected at the farm, and those left over wait nearby for the next project. "They don't say 'thrifty Scots' for nothing," observes Pickett.

The cabin's walls were chinked with native mud by children attending a Rural Hill event. "We made a formula out of the mud," McLean recalls. "Just like the olden days."

The cabin was inaugurated Jan. 1 during a traditional Scottish "walkabout" by society members and the public. Scottish farm communities once a year checked their towns' boundaries to make sure they remained intact, McLean explains. At Rural Hill, the three-mile walk, called First Footin', wound past the fieldstone-enclosed Davidson burial ground and a restored one-room school that served the Davidson children. Another school, the circa-1898 Bethesda School for African American children, is awaiting restoration. It was moved to Rural Hill from another Mecklenburg site where it was threatened by development.

The farm, so isolated that you can still hear birdsong and smell new-mown hay there, is an anomaly in fast-growing Mecklenburg. A recent report says that the Charlotte metro area lost one-third of its farmland in the 20 years between 1987 and 2007.

Asked what value Rural Hill represents to an area where so many residents are newcomers, Keets Taylor says, "Where you've been determines who you are. It is the collective memory of a community that creates the richness of living in a community."

Rural Hill could extend the richness of that heritage for generations to come. "We hope to add to that colorful pageantry by working with the school systems and the people of the community," Taylor says, "to showcase some of those great people who helped get us where we are."

Hannah Miller is a Carolina Country contributing writer who lives in Mecklenburg County

Public activities at Rural Hill

Group and self-guided tours can be scheduled anytime. Special events will include the Loch Norman Highland Games April 18-20. Muscular, kilts-clad laddies will heave bales of hay and heavy poles in the Scottish Heavy Athletics competitions. Kilts-clad lassies will compete in Highland dances, and the assembled Scots descendants, bearing clan colors, will worship on Sunday at the Davidson burial ground.

May 17–18 Smoke and battle cries will rise from fields as re-enactors re-trace the Revolutionary battles of Cowans Ford and Weitzel's Mill. Boy Scouts of Bethel Presbyterian Church's Troop # 72, which helps Rural Hill with various events, especially enjoy the annual event, says Scoutmaster Rick Monroe. "They get a chance to walk around and talk to the re-enactors."

Sept. 11–14 Young thrill-seekers will seek their way through the Amazing Maize Maze. Last year, 17,000 would-be explorers wandered paths that formed the shape of the Liberty Bell. History-based clues hidden in mailboxes enabled them to solve a crossword puzzle. And they got an extra bonus: the chance to name a new Highlands calf. From among names like "Sugar Lips," "Bubbles," "Angus McTavish" and "All Beef Patti," officials blindly drew "Maizey." Submitted by three classes of Charlotte's Metro School for developmentally challenged children, it's the perfect name, declares McLean.

Nov. 7–9 Eagle-eyed black-and-white Border Collies will herd flocks of milling sheep toward the farmhouse during the semiannual Rural Hill Sheep Dog Trials. Spectators will sip cider and soft drinks, listen to Celtic and Appalachian music and send the kids off for wagon rides.

For more information:
Rural Hill Farm, 4431 Neck Rd., Huntersville, NC, 28078, Phone: (704) 875-3113, Web: www.ruralhill.net

"It was the best experience I ever had"

Touchstone Energy and his Big Brother helped him reach higher

By Courtney Bowman

After attending camp on a Touchstone Energy cooperatives scholarship, both Josh Blocker (left) and his Big Brother Tate Groome are true-blue Tar Heels.

Basketball camps put fun in fundamentals for 6–8th grade students

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives are partners in an educational and athletic summer opportunity for rising sixth through eighth graders. Middle school students are encouraged to apply for 50 all-expense paid scholarships to attend basketball camp: boys may apply for the one hosted by UNC-Chapel Hill's Roy Williams, June 21–25, 2008, and girls may apply for the one hosted by NC State University's Kay Yow, June 22–26, 2008.

Applicants are judged on their academics, extra-curricular activities and an essay that must be submitted with the application. Applications will be accepted through March 28. Scholarship winners will be announced by May 1.

Eligible students who are interested in the scholarships should contact their local cooperative or Lisa Mumma at (800) 662-8835, ext. 3214, or Lisa.Mumma@ncemcs.com. For an application, visit www.ncemcs.com or visit www.kayyowcamps.com or http://tarheelblue.cstv.com/ot/unc-07-touchstone-promo.html.

Josh Blocker hasn't always followed UNC basketball. Growing up, the amiable 14-year-old from Asheville had more important things to think about, like taking care of his younger brother and sister, helping them with homework, and cooking dinner.

Moving with his aunt or mother more than eight times in a five-year span, Josh learned quickly how to adjust, adapt and overcome. These are abilities and values he taught himself, ones that set him apart from his peer group and establish Josh as a role model in his own right. However, his own mentor, 28-year-old Tate Groome, taught Josh another important skill: how to shoot a free throw.

Paired together through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program of Western North Carolina when Josh was in fourth grade, Tate and Josh have been friends almost five years, learning from each other and growing together, with basketball as a common ground. For Tate, a 2001 UNC-Chapel Hill graduate and longtime Tar Heel sports fan, his fervor for Carolina basketball began when, as a child, he attended the Dean Smith basketball school at the university's campus every summer for seven years. He couldn't help but share this passion with Josh, and it wasn't long, Josh said, before he was "hooked on the Heels."

Tate encouraged Josh to apply for a scholarship to attend the same basketball camp he spent his summers at as a child. He was accepted, and last summer, Josh attended the 2007 Touchstone Energy Roy Williams Basketball Camp in Chapel Hill. The first day of camp was June 23, Josh's 14th birthday.

"Tate heard about the scholarship on the radio," Josh said. "He told me just to trust him because I had never been to basketball camp before. I am glad I did. It was the best experience I ever had."

From learning the discipline and drive of the sport to meeting his favorite player, Carolina Men's Basketball forward Tyler Hansborough, Josh absorbed the experience and came back renewed, ready to face life's challenges with the strength of a team player. "I have more confidence in my basketball abilities," he said. "But I was also able to make new friends and live on a college campus for a week. That made me really want to go to college."

He's one step closer to realizing that dream, said Tate, who noted that Josh is on track to earn all A's and B's this year, a first-time accomplishment for the progressing student. Tate said, "I think the most important thing was that the camp opened his eyes to what life is if he keeps up his good grades and continues to hang out with the right friends."

Tate, who is now married with a 2-year-old son, Davis, who adores his "Big Brother" has seen Josh grow. "He always has a smile on his face despite his life's challenges. He now knows what it is like to go to college. He now sees that college is a reality instead of it just being a dream."

Courtney Bowman is a senior English student at N.C. State University and an intern in Corporate Communications with the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

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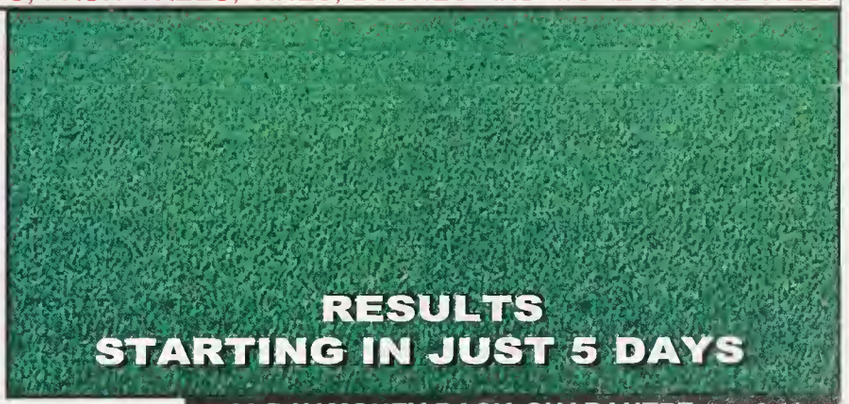

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Welcome to the World of Work

The Woolworth candy counter

The first job I ever had was shortly after I was married in 1946 at the age of 17. I got a job at F.W. Woolworth in Winston-Salem at the candy counter. What a breeze. All I had to do was sell candy, nuts and brownies all day long.

Well, I had to stock the counter, clean, weigh the product, take the money.

We were allowed to sample the goods, too. One day I sampled so many hot cashew nuts that I got sick. I never ate another cashew until a year or so ago. When I do eat them I make sure I don't act like a pig and eat too many.

In exchange for my work among all these goodies, I was paid the excellent amount of 44.5 cents per hour. For a full week's work I received $18 after taxes.

My husband was in school under the G.I. Bill, receiving a small check each month. This paid for food and other necessities. The money from my job paid the rent on our apartment. I have had many jobs since, but they all paid a bit more.

Virginia Kinley, Woodleaf, EnergyUnited

Generic quality

I was 14 when I got my first job at Banner Drug Company. On my first day, the pharmacist, Al, asked me if I knew what "generic" meant. Trying to make a great first impression, I said, "Of course! It is something that you inherit!"

Jenny Corriher, Statesville, EnergyUnited

GO ONLINE
www.carolinacountry.com

Thanks to everyone who sent us stories about your first job. You can see more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish photos and stories of your gardens. [Deadline was Jan. 15.] For more themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 24.

Burger King graduate

I had just turned 16 when I got my first job at Burger King in Crabtree Valley Mall, Raleigh, the day after Thanksgiving. I proudly got into my uniform, fixed up my hair and put on my make-up. My mother and sisters said that they would come by the restaurant to get some dinner when they went shopping at the mall.

By the time my mother arrived, my hair was falling out of my ponytail holder, I had sweated off all of my make-up, my bangs were sticking to my forehead, and I was covered in grease. When I got home that evening, I declared to my mother that I had made up my mind to go to college.

Catherine Busam, Youngsville, Wake Electric

Lost and found

I thought my first day of working on a public job was to be my last.

I had been a stay-at-home mom, and two of my children were in school. My then 5-year-old daughter decided she wanted to go to kindergarten like some of her friends. So, I decided to get a job so I could send her. (Back in the 1970s, there was no public kindergarten.)

I found a job working at a sewing plant, USI in Farmville. The very first day when I got ready to clock out, I found I had lost my watch. My husband had given it to me when I was 16, and it was special to me. I vowed not to come back the next day, but my husband encouraged me to finish out the week. I never found my watch, but by the end of that week that little pay check looked mighty good.

After 35 years, I'm still working and I've had several watches, but I remember the one I lost.

Faye Strickland, Snow Hill, Pitt & Greene EMC

A Tanner girl

I was 17 years old when I got my first job at Tanner Companies in 1981. It was a full-time job hand-sewing buttons, shoulder pads, snaps and hooks.

I still remember the day I got my first paycheck. It was only $84, but I was so excited, you'd thought I had won the lottery. As soon as break came up, I went to my mom, who worked there also, to show her my check. She gave me a big smile and told me she was so proud of me.

While working at Tanners, I finished high school there in the lunch room through a program sponsored by Isothermal Community College. I got my diploma the same time my class graduated at RS Central.

I worked at Tanners for six years, and then at Absorba, and then at the J.C. Cowan plant until I became disabled with Lupus. You don't know how much I miss working a job. My friends at work called me a workaholic, but I loved it!

Never complain about your job. Always be thankful for it, because some people don't have a job, and some are not able to work and have to be on a fixed income.

Sharon Hardin, Rutherfordton, Rutherford EMC

Flamingo milkshake trick

My first job was as a waitress in Asheboro at The Flamingo across from Bossong Hosiery. I was nervous and wanted to do a good job.

I waited tables and worked behind the counter where there were bar stools for people to sit and enjoy a beverage or milkshake.

One time this man who worked at Bossong walked in, ordered a milkshake, and while I was making the milkshake he told me he was going next door to the gas station. He returned, and I handed him the milkshake. He said he didn't order a milkshake. Well, I didn't know what I was going to do, because I knew he did and I needed the money.

The door opened and in came his look-alike twin. They said you should have seen the look on my face. I sure was relieved and embarrassed. They made up this joke to trick me.

Mona Manns, Trinity, EnergyUnited

Breadwinner and scholar

I got out into the working world fairly young. My dad passed away when I was a senior in high school. I had bills to pay, and our new mobile home to pay for. I made the decision to get a full-time job and quit school.

The school wouldn't hear of my quitting and told me not to. Next day, I was scheduled to go to work at our local poultry plant.

I did graduate with honors, and I got the title to my mobile home about one month before graduation.

I accomplished my goals. I didn't lose what my dad and I had, and I graduated from school. He would have been happy to have seen my last report card.

Nancy Stanley, Roaring River, Surry-Yadkin

Face-to-face with Andy Griffith

When I was 16, the summer before my senior year in high school, I went to stay with my grandparents in Manteo on the Outer Banks. They owned The Cloth Barn, and that is where I had my first real job.

One day while I was helping tidy up the rolls of cloth, a man wearing sunglasses came into the shop. It only took me a few seconds to recognize him. It was the actor Andy Griffith. I was so stunned but somehow managed to ask if I could help him. He wanted to know if we had any burlap material. All I managed to do was ask him to wait while I got my grandfather. After Andy Griffith left, my grandfather said he would have introduced me to him, but he was afraid I'd faint.

Vicki Martin, Shelby, Rutherford EMC

Welcomed at Burroughs Wellcome

At the age of 22, I got my first job. It was a tremendous challenge, because I was disabled. I was stricken with polio and meningitis at the age of 11 months old. I walk on crutches and wear a long left leg brace.

I wanted to work even as a teenager. I first wanted to be a nurse. As I grew older I wanted to become a secretary, because I felt being in the administrative field would be better for me physically. I wanted to become a secretary like Lucille Ball.

I attended the Greenville School of Commerce for Secretarial Science. It was a nine-month course, and I graduated with a diploma. The instructor guaranteed you employment if you completed the course. She would send you on interviews just before graduation. About two weeks before I graduated, she began to set up interviews for me. Within two days, I was hired. I really was looking forward to going on interviews and was disappointed that I was hired on the first one. But sometimes we don't know what is best for us at that time.

The job was with one of the finest companies in Greenville. Burroughs Wellcome Company hired me on Feb. 7, 1980. I worked there for 15½ years.

I began working in the shipping department as a Clerk II, then transferred to another department as a Clerk IV. This was the highest clerk you could become, and I performed administrative duties. Being disabled was less strenuous for me because Burroughs Wellcome accommodated the disabled in their workforce.

I had to come out of the work world in 1995 because of problems with my right knee and surgery for arthritis. Also, post-polio syndrome caused me to experience some fatigue.

Even though I did not get the Lucille Ball secretarial position, just being part of Burroughs Wellcome paid off for me, and to this day I am reaping the benefit from my first and only job.

Patricia Brown, Greenville
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC

continued on next page

The bagboy at A&P

At 16 I entered the working world as a bagboy at my local A&P supermarket. The A&Ps were once common in the South and are now defunct. I worked there 3½ years, through a year of community college.

The A&P was an old-fashioned supermarket with checkers, bagboys, produce clerks and meat cutters. The checkers actually had to ring items up on the cash register, keying in the price sticker amount, and were checked randomly by the head cashier for speed and accuracy. The other bagboys and I were expected to place items neatly into the paper bags and in the proper order, with heavier items on the bottom and bread and eggs on top. We then pushed the items in the shopping cart out to the customer's car and placed the bags in the vehicle.

We were always polite and were occasionally rewarded with a small tip, which made our day. We wore dress shirts with neckties and a long red apron tied behind our backs. Today I yearn for that type of customer service and employee pride.

Tim Stewart, Hope Mills, South River EMC

With Mom at Hudson-Belk's

Mom and I decided to work a Christmas job at Hudson-Belk's store in downtown Raleigh. Neither of us had worked in a store, although Mom did have experience as a bookkeeper. But I only babysat as a job. Mother worked in fine jewelry, and I worked the stationery and book department.

The best part was getting up each day and heading off to work with my mother. Our day included taking a break together and having lunch either in the cafeteria upstairs or at one of the lunch counter's of Woolworth's or Kresge's.

The sad day came when Hudson-Belk's left downtown Raleigh. My first job taught me confidence and the ability to take on a new experience, but the best part was being in a partnership with my mother.

Anne Wright Andrews, Avon
Cape Hatteras Electric

Drug store courtesy

My first real job came my junior year of high school when I worked for a local pharmacy. I was what they call now a pharmacy technician. I counted pills, typed labels and worked the register. I loved my job. I made good money, for a teenager, and I did not go home smelling like a burger. My boss Grady was really tough though. He expected perfection, and when he did not get it he let us have it. There were several girls my age who worked in the pharmacy summer, weekends and after school.

There were many nights when I would go home crying because of something my boss had said or done. I would tell my Dad and he would always tell me, "That builds character." Well after working there I should have enough character to go around the world. My boss saw my Dad quite frequently in social situations, and he always said such nice things to my Dad about me. I guess that is why I stayed as long as I did. I respected my boss, and he taught me what it meant to be a good employee. He believed no one should wait more than five minutes on a prescription. If the big chains only felt that way!

My Dad always said if I could work for Grady that I could work with and for anyone. Because of that work I pursued a career in the pharmaceutical industry. I worked in drug research for many years.

I am now concentrating on raising my two beautiful boys. I only hope that their first job gives them as much as mine gave me.

Page Crater, Lexington, EnergyUnited

A lesson in silence

When I started my first job as Davie County High School librarian, I didn't know I would inherit homeroom responsibilities. They were good kids, but not much younger than I.

All went well until the first reporting period when pupils returned for report cards. Until students cleared their library account, teachers would hold their report cards. My homeroom group fidgeted while I attended to a long line of protesting students with outstanding debts and overdue books.

Soon my students felt free to talk with blow horn voices. I warned them several times to quiet down, but they continued. As the line dwindled, I turned my angry attention to them. I would make sure this wouldn't happen again.

I wouldn't release them to catch their bus. We all heard bus engines revving. Their eyes rolled, they squirmed, but no noise. I held firm. We watched others dashing for their busses, but my class sat still. I didn't care if I had to drive everyone home. They weren't going to do that to me again.

Bus noises grew louder. Worry showed on faces. Believing I had made my point, I said, "You can go."

They ran like Olympians. Had I held them too long? I waited, knowing I might have to drive 24 students home. I waited. Silence never sounded so good.

Gail C. Johnson, Minnesott Beach
Tideland Electric

send us your best EARN $50

Here are the themes in our **"Nothing Could Be Finer"** series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you $50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

April 2008
North Carolina Vacation Photos
Where did you go, when, what happened?
Deadline: February 15

May 2008
A Pet's Palace
The best home your pet ever had. Send photos, if you have them.
Deadline: March 15

June 2008
Wedding Stories
Your favorite wedding story and photo.
Deadline: April 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
   Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
   Or online: www.carolinacountry.com

A healthy breakfast

There are many good reasons why breakfast is often referred to as "the most important meal of the day." Eating a healthy breakfast can help you perform and feel your best throughout the day.

The importance of breakfast

During the night our metabolism slows down to compensate for decreased activity. Eating sends a message to your body that the nightly "fast" is over; this boosts your metabolism and energy levels for the day. Research has shown that breakfast eaters perform better in school, finish tasks more quickly and are more likely to maintain a healthy body weight. This may be due to the fact that breakfast provides energy, helps balance blood sugar and keeps your appetite satisfied until lunch. The key to reaping the benefits of breakfast is to make sure what you eat is healthy.

Components of a healthy breakfast

There are three components of a healthy breakfast:

- complex carbohydrates
- lean protein
- healthy fat

A balance of these three nutrients will provide much needed energy and help you feel satisfied throughout the morning. Many people make the mistake of eating a breakfast consisting of only simple carbohydrates (sweetened cereal, toast with jam, fruit juice, a bagel and coffee). This leads to a rapid increase in blood sugar followed by a rapid drop, leaving you feeling lethargic and hungry all over again.

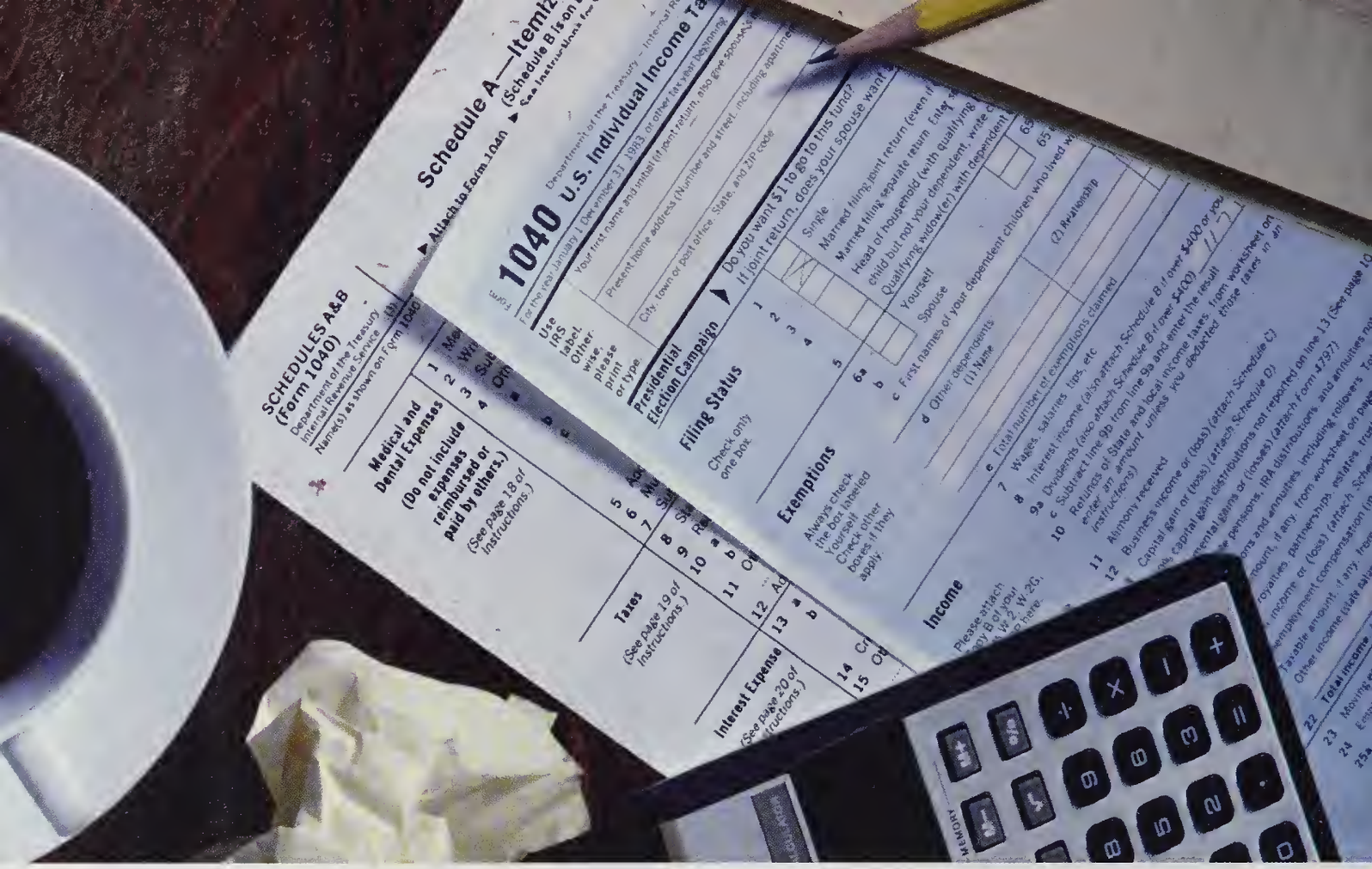
A health breakfast should contain the three components listed above. Always start by choosing complex carbohydrates. They provide higher amounts of fiber that break down more slowly, helping you feel full longer and slowing the release of sugar into the bloodstream. They also get you working toward your fiber goal for the day. Add to that a 3-ounce serving of lean protein and some healthy fat, and you will stay satisfied until your next meal.

Eating a healthy breakfast can help you perform and feel your best throughout the day.

Examples of healthy breakfast choices

- One egg with whole wheat toast, turkey or soy bacon, and 1 small orange.
- One whole wheat English muffin with 1 tablespoon almond butter, sliced banana and 1 cup soy milk.
- One cup steel cut oatmeal with dried fruit and nuts.
- One cup low-fat yogurt with berries, sunflower seeds and bananas.
- Unsweetened, high-fiber cereal with skim or soy milk, berries and walnuts.
- One cup of low-fat cottage cheese, fruit, ground flax seeds and 1 slice whole wheat toast.
- One low-fat bran muffin, 1 apple, 1 boiled egg.
- 6-ounce fruit smoothie made with ground flaxseed, berries and soymilk.

From "Your **Wellness for Life Guide**," published by Harris Teeter, a grocery based in Matthews, N.C. The complete guide and daily tracker are available free at all Harris Teeter stores. For more information and a free 7-day meal planner, visit www.harristeeter.com.



Low-income taxpayers may be eligible for

an "earned income" refund

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service estimates that millions of dollars in Earned Income Tax Credits are not claimed in North Carolina each year.

For the 2007 tax year, an eligible taxpayer could receive up to $4,716.

In 2006, more than 750,000 working North Carolina taxpayers received over $1.4 billion dollars through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The number of eligible taxpayers typically increases every year.

Those who do not claim the credit usually do not know about it and are unaware that they meet the qualifications.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a refundable credit that is available to working taxpayers who in 2007 earned less than $37,783 ($39,783 if married filing jointly) if all eligibility criteria is met. Since the EITC is a refundable credit, eligible taxpayers may receive the credit even if they owe no tax and had no income tax withheld.

The basic EITC criteria for tax year 2007 are as follows.

Taxpayers must meet all of the eligibility criteria and have earned less than:

- $37,783 ($39,783 if married filing jointly) with more than one qualifying child.
- $33,241 ($35,241 if married filing jointly) with one qualifying child.
- $12,590 ($14,590 if married filing jointly) with no qualifying children.

For taxpayers who qualify, the maximum EITC that can be received is:

- $4,716 with two or more qualifying children.
- $2,853 with one qualifying child.
- $428 with no qualifying children.

Free help

In addition, the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) will offer free tax preparation and electronic filing to taxpayers with income of $40,000 and below, for the upcoming tax season. Certified volunteers sponsored by various organizations will help prepare and file basic tax returns at various sites in communities in North Carolina and across the country.

For more information about EITC, free tax preparation at VITA sites, or general tax information, go to www.irs.gov or call (800) 829-1040.

Recycling other stuff

Recycling items other than paper, plastic and glass is still no easy task. But if you're committed to unloading something without adding it to a landfill, a little research can go a long way.

A May 2006 article published in E/The Environmental Magazine by Sally Deneen entitled "How to Recycle Practically Anything" outlines where and how to recycle dozens of household items. Disposable batteries, she says, can usually be dropped off at municipal hazardous waste facilities, where they will be disassembled and their parts recycled for use in other products. Also, check with retailers such as Walgreen's and Batteries Plus. You can send them to Battery Solutions, a mail-order company that will recycle them for 85 cents per pound.

Portable electronics—cell phones, video games, MP3 players, etc.— usually contain heavy metals and chemicals that can pollute soils and groundwater. Deneen recommends dropping them off at your local Staples, Office Depot or Radio Shack store, which should take them back free of charge even if you didn't buy them there. Or ship them to CollectiveGood (4508 Bibb Boulevard, Tucker, GA 30084), which will recycle them and donate the proceeds to the charity of your choice.

Check out the Earth911.org Web site for a free keyword-searchable, zip code-based database of municipal and commercial recycling and hazardous waste disposal facilities across the U.S. The database, can also direct you to the proper facility or local business to off-load potentially toxic items, like old tires or unused paint, in a safe and responsible manner. If you don't have handy Internet access, give Earth911's toll-free telephone hotline a call at 1-800-CLEANUP.

To learn more: "How to Recycle Practically Anything," www.emagazine.com/view/?3172; LampRecycle.org, www.lamprecycle.org; Battery Solutions, www.batteryrecycling.com; CollectiveGood, www.collectivegood.com; Earth911.org, www.earth911.org.

High school clubs

Participating in an environmental club is an excellent way for high school students to learn about environmental issues while providing measurable benefit to their community.

Most clubs focus on issues close to home, like cleaning up local riverbanks and beaches strewn with litter, restoring degraded wildlife habitat, and planting and managing a community organic garden. Other ideas include starting a recycling program (or setting up a compost bin) on school grounds, involving the school or community in measuring and lowering their "carbon footprint," organizing carpools for students who drive, and asking school officials to print all documents double-sided.

Clubs can offer assistance to a local group already working on a project, such as saving a threatened parcel of open space or working with a local polluter to clean up its act.

Several national nonprofits help environmental clubs find focus. One of the leaders is EarthTeam, formed in 2000 with the mission of "creating a new generation of environmental leaders" by introducing teens to inspiring environmental experiences. EarthTeam clubs are involved in tree plantings, river and beach clean-ups, visits to local wetlands and nature preserves, and environmental awareness days at schools. Showing a relevant environmental documentary on the big screen in a school auditorium or some other venue is a way to get a larger membership base. Some recent releases that might stimulate discussion and ideas include: "The Cost of Cool," a look at the environmental consequences of excessive consumerism, hosted by former Baywatch star Alexandra Paul; "A Crude Awakening," about the impact of global oil dependency; and Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth."

Earth Tomorrow, a network of high school environmental clubs administered by the National Wildlife Federation, helps clubs gain access to a wide range of resources, including the Schoolyard Habitats How-to Guide, which walks high schoolers through the steps involved in enhancing wildlife habitat and ecological health on school grounds, and the Science and Civics program, which shows students how to use science, economics, the law and politics to address a local conservation issue.

To learn more: EarthTeam, www.earthteam.net; Earth Tomorrow, www.nwf.org/earthtomorrow.

Wikipedia

Resources are now available to help consumers recycle everything from electronics to fluorescent light bulbs to disposable batteries.

Got an Environmental Question?
Send it to: EarthTalk, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit it at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/thisweek, or e-mail: earthtalk@emagazine.com. Read past columns at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/archives.php.

Operate a portable generator safely

You can use a portable generator to supply electricity to your appliances if an emergency exists during a power outage. But if used improperly they can kill you and the people who are restoring power to your building. They also can damage the appliances you connect.

Home emergency generators are usually powered by gasoline, which itself is dangerous and must be properly handled.

Generator sizes vary. Units capable of handling from 3,000 to 6,000 watts (including starting surge requirements) that can power multiple "survival" appliances such as a refrigerator, sump pump and furnace fan cost from $500 to $2,000. Units putting out 7,000 to 9,000 watts can power a few rooms (not including a central air conditioner) and cost from $1,000 to $2,000. The bigger generators for 10,000 watts or more can power a small house and cost $3,000 and up.

Connecting a generator to the main electrical supply for your house requires the services of a qualified, licensed electrician. Installing the connection and switch (as explained below) can cost $600 to $1,000.

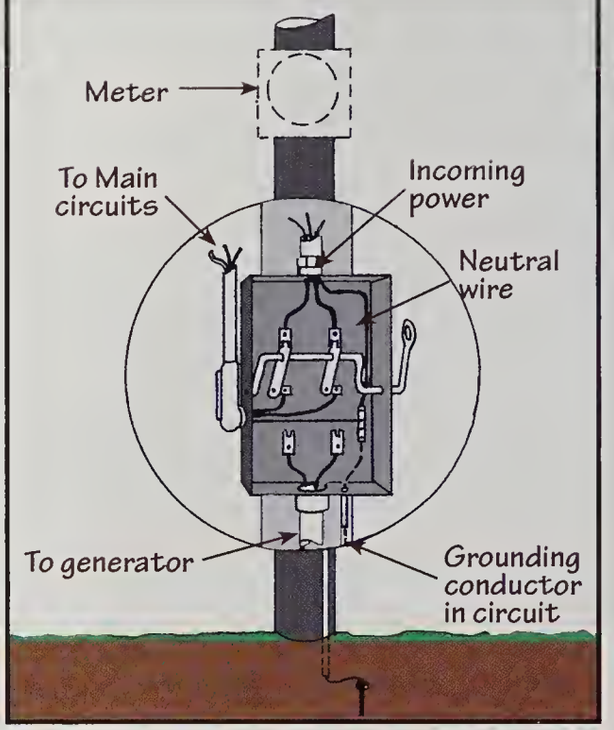
Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your electric cooperative.

WARNING: If you connect a portable electric generator to the main electrical supply coming into the house, the electrical generator could feed back into your electric cooperative's system and electrocute workers who are repairing the electrical lines.

To avoid back-feeding of electricity into utility systems, you must have a qualified, licensed electrician install a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch (see illustration) between the generator and utility power in compliance with all state and local electrical codes. (A minimum of 10-gauge wiring must be used.)

Your generator might not be large enough to handle the load of all the lights, appliances, TV, etc. at one time. To prevent dangerous overloading, refer to the owner's manual and calculate wattage requirements correctly.

Typical Double Pole, Double Throw Transfer Switch for 120/240-volt single-phase service



If you do this	This could happen	Unless you prevent it
Attempt to connect generator directly to the electrical system of any building.	You can kill or injure a person repairing service lines. The electricity you generate will back feed through the building's electrical system to the outside utility feed lines. Attempting to connect to the incoming utility service could result in electrocution. If your electric cooperative's line crew is restoring electrical service while your generator is connected to the incoming utility service, you could start a fire or seriously damage your building.	A qualified, licensed electrician must install a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch to connect the generator to a building's electrical system. This is required by the National Electrical Code. Connection must meet local ordinances. A minimum of 10-gauge wiring must be used.
Fail to ground the generator's electrical system adequately.	Entire generator could become electrically charged and cause electrocution.	Make sure that the unit is connected to an appropriate electrical ground, in accordance with the National Electric Code. Follow instructions supplied with the generator.
Operate generator in rain, wet, icy or flooded conditions.	Water conducts electricity. If water comes in contact with electricity at the generator's frame and other surfaces, it will cause an electrical shock to anyone touching them.	Operate generator in a clean, dry, well ventilated area. Make sure your hands are dry.
Tamper with factory set engine speed settings.	Tampering with the engine speed adjustment could result in overheating of attachments and could cause a fire.	Never attempt to "speed-up" the engine to obtain more performance. Both the output voltage and frequency will be thrown out of standard by this practice, endangering you and the attachments.

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Mules

By Donna Campbell Smith

Not long ago, mules were sold from barn lots like used cars are sold today. By 1960, there were too few to count. Now the mule is making a comeback in North Carolina.

The mule, perhaps better than any other animal, symbolizes North Carolina's farming heritage. Known for its intelligence, strength and hardiness the mule was able to stand up to our hot and humid summers easier than the horse. Mule traders set up sale barns in towns across the state for buying and selling mules, making them an important part of the state's economy. A hundred years ago, these businesses were as common as today's used car lot. One of those towns, Benson, in Johnston County, has become famous for its mule trade. It still celebrates the mule's contribution with one of the country's largest Mule Days Festival. This event annually changes the small town into a boomtown for the last week of September, with people from all over the East coming with mules and horses to compete in rodeos, shows and other events.

We can thank George Washington for introducing the mule to America. Washington's breeding program was aimed at producing a larger, stronger mule to be used on the farm. He imported donkeys from Spain, the first being a gift from King Charles III, to breed to his horses.

Washington was right in his belief that mules would be important to American agriculture. In fact, mules from Washington's stock became the forerunners of quality mules that were the backbone of American agriculture for many generations of farmers, especially in the South.

Farming

Mules plowed the fields, harvested the crops and carried the crop to market. On tobacco farms, a mule-drawn transplanter was used to set the plants in the ground. At harvest, mules pulled wooden sleds loaded with primed tobacco from the fields to the barns, where the leaves were cured. Finally, the mules were used to carry wagonloads of cured tobacco to market. Cotton farming was also dependent in the mule, as were corn, bean and peanut farmers.

The average farm in North Carolina at the turn of the 20th century had four mules. In 1935 a national census reported that North Carolina had 217,000 mules. In 1950 there were 250,000 mules here. But by 1960 there were not enough mules to even count. Automation had made them obsolete.

Military

Mules played an important role in military history from the time of the Civil War. They carried heavy artillery and moved supplies and men. The North purchased their mules from dealers, but the Confederate soldiers had to provide their own. That meant mules were taken from the farm and put into military service, leaving the workforce at home shorthanded. This dilemma might have contributed to the South's defeat in that war since their mule shortage was a serious economic problem.

Mules are still used in the military for packing in supplies and ammunition at locations inaccessible to vehicles, including the mountains of the Middle East. In the manual, Special Forces Use of Pack Animals, it states, "Animal transport systems can greatly increase mission success when hostile elements and conditions require the movement of combat troops and equipment by foot." The manual describes the characteristics of the mule as having intelligence, agility and stamina, which make them excellent pack animals. Some soldiers are trained in mulemanship in North Carolina. They learn to put on the packs, how to ride across difficult terrain and to care for the mules.

Companion

The mule is making a comeback in North Carolina and across the country. The 1996 Equine Survey reported 1,700 mules in the state with a value of $1.7 million. Most are companion or pleasure animals, some are used in the tourist trade, and a few are back on the farm.

The mule's intelligence and sense of self-preservation has earned it the unjust reputation of being stubborn. Not so, mule fanciers are quick to tell you. It's just a mule is too smart to do something out of blind obedience if they see that the action is not in their best interest. Trail riders and packers have learned to trust the mule's uncanny ability to sense danger, and they appreciate their surefootedness and sense of balance on the trail.

Are mules better than horses? It all depends on whom you ask. Many mule owners confess that mules are not for everyone. Shannon Hoffman has three mules and is on the board of directors for the Carolina Mule Association (www.carolinamuleassoc.com or 919-269-3561). She showed horses as a child and then Quarter Horses on a national level before getting into mules about eight years ago. She says, "Mules made me question everything I thought I knew about horses for a long time. I am still learning from them and about them." Shannon drives, rides and packs with her mules, Lucky Number Seven, Shiloh, and Sadie Mae. Of mules and their owners Shannon says, "The people who get along with mules are the salt of the earth type with very little ego." She says of the mules, "It seems as soon as you want to show off, and have a crowd watching, the mule will playfully make a fool of you every time!"

James Lamm of Wake Forest has a mule that is fast becoming famous. Rocky was named America's Ultimate Horse Idol at the national contest held in Richmond last October by doing a five-minute routine including some pretty difficult tricks. The contest organizers did not expect a mule to enter, much less win the title, leading them to rename the contest America's Ultimate Equine Partner.

Rocky's repertoire includes making funny faces, fetching, pulling the family dog around in a cart, rolling a barrel around, and standing on a small pedestal. Rocky demonstrates a mule's uncanny surefootedness by walking onto a teeter-totter bridge, then placing his feet carefully until the bridge is perfectly balanced. For a grand finale Rocky jumps into the bed of James's pickup truck.

Mule shows are held throughout the state, with every event common to horse shows. One event unique to mule shows is coon jumping. This is a contest rooted in the old southern tradition of hunting raccoon for its fur. Hunters used their mules to pack the pelts out of the forest. The need to cross fences in the chase behind hounds was no problem, since a mule can easily jump a fence as high as its own back from a standstill. But a wire fence was tricky, because if the mule did not clear it he could get a nasty cut. To protect his mule, the hunter simply threw his jacket over the wire fence, and then gave the cue for the mule to jump. The hunter then retrieved his coat and climbed across, too.

Human nature being what it is, there was soon a contest of whose mule could jump higher. Today, mules that never met a coonhound or a raccoon are competing for championship ribbons by jumping hurdles inside show arenas.

Not to give the impression that mule ownership is only about fun and games in North Carolina, there are some who still put the mule to the plow. Farming with mules in North Carolina is mostly done for the sake of nostalgia. Historic farm parks often keep mules and demonstrate how they were used in the old days. Whatever their purpose, you no longer have to look hard to find mules in the Tar Heel State.

Donna Campbell Smith writes from her home in Franklin County. She has a degree in equine technology and is a certified riding instructor. Her latest project, "The Book of Mules: Selecting, Breeding, and Caring for Equine Hybrids" will be released by The Lyons Press in 2008. Visit her Web site at www.donnacampbellsmith.com

Donna Campbell Smith

Shannon Hoffman, of Zebulon, showing "Lucky Number Seven" in a western class at the Annual Roxboro Mule and Draft Horse Show.

"Our tracks are all over the place"

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN NORTH CAROLINA

From 1933 until America's 1942 entry into World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal administration employed more than 3 million men between the ages of 18 and 25 in the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the most successful economic recovery and natural resource work programs in U.S. history. In addition to providing meaningful work for unemployed young men during the Depression, the CCC instilled a pride among enrollees and built a resource foundation nationwide that greatly enhanced American strength during the war and afterwards.

Every region of the U.S. today bears the stamp of the CCC—from drainage ditches and highways to national parks and forests, from fire towers and gymnasiums to picnic shelters and restored farmland, the "CCC boys" were there. In North Carolina, nearly 50,000 men worked with the CCC. Men in more than 39 highly-organized, non-military camps built facilities and improved such places as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Outer Banks beaches, fish hatcheries, the Lake Mattamuskeet lodge, Singletary and Waccamaw lakes, all the eastern military bases, Croatan National Forest, Richmond County farmland, and state park swimming facilities. Many of the enrollees became leading citizens and remained solid friends. As CCC alumnus Frank L. Bridges of the Balsam Grove camp said in 1990, "Our tracks are all over the place."

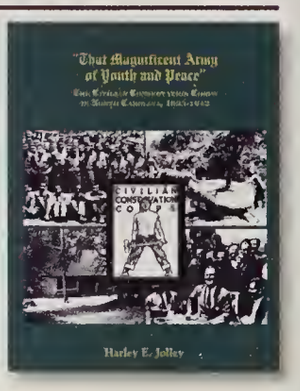
—Michael E.C. Gery

Fourth Corps Area, 1936. Mars Hill College Archives

African Americans were enrolled in segregated camps. This one in Raeford assembled its own band.

The Historical Publications Section of the N.C. Office of Archives and History recently published a history of the Civilian Conservation Corps in North Carolina. "That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace" is a thorough account of the program here compiled by Mars Hill College professor emeritus Harley E. Jolley and edited and indexed by Robert M. Topkins.

The book is 178 pages in softcover and contains some 90 photos and illustrations. The price is $20 plus sales tax and shipping. Visit www.ncpublications.com or call (919) 733-7442 to learn more.



G.B. Maneval, June 1934. Mars Hill College Archives

N.C. Division of Forestry, State Archives

Above: The neatly organized Globe Camp F-6 in Caldwell County showed a pride typical of others nationwide.

Left: CCC men dug ditches at the State Forest Nursery in Johnston County.

Below: Enrollees like these at Camp Jim Staton in Old Fort maintained bonds with each other for life.

Mars Hill College Archives, courtesy [illegible]

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM

Carolina country if...

...your papa tells you to run down there to that garden root cellar and ***fetch a mess of taters*** *to cook for dinner.*

From Charlene Campbell, Bladenboro

From Charlene Campbell, Bladenboro

... You call your cousin three miles down the road to see if the mailman has run yet.

... Your granny puts on a pot of greens to make pot liquor for curing your cold.

... You use grease from Sunday's fried chicken to season your collards or greens.

... Your frying pan is called "the spider."

From Dwayne Fields, Seven Springs

... You know who Slim Short was and wept when he died not long ago.

From Kelli Reece, Morganton

... You went squirrel hunting with your daddy, and it was so cold that you warmed your hands with the heat from the squirrels in the bag.

... You caught horny heads and suckers in the river near your home.

... Fall of the year meant looking outside on a Saturday morning and seeing a deer hanging from the tree in the yard.

... When it would snow your daddy baked sweet taters and parched peanuts on the heater in the house.

From Virginia Dare R. Hollowell, Long Acre

... Three generations of your family graduated from Pantego High School and now it's demolished in the name of progress.

... When the big yellow/orange school buses start to roll in the fall, the ditch banks are dressed with goldenrod, and the pink, blue, wine and white of the morning glory winds itself up brown cornstalks.

... You are related to every native in the county.

... You've watched the sun rise and set over the Pamplico, and then watched the moonbeams dance a path across the same ol' river.

... Everyone smiles and speaks, whether they know you or not

... You walked carefully around the wild persimmon tree in the fall so the fruit did not squish between your toes.

... You played Roll for the Bat, Red Rover, Hide and Seek, Fruit Basket Turn Over, Button Button, Sling the Biscuit, London Bridge, Drop the Handkerchief, and Poor Kitty with your cousins in the front yard.

... With your dime, you bought a 12-ounce Pepsi and a nickel candy bar, then divided it three ways for a tea party with your sister and aunt.

From Edna Ruth Mercer, Beulaville

... It always was a joy for the Raleigh man or the Watkins man to come by with their products.

... You went to the State Fair on the school bus.

... You listened to "Lone Ranger," "Grand Ole Opry" and "Portia Faces Life" on the radio.

... You courted in pick-up trucks or squeezed in with two other couples in a car.

... You used homemade corn shucks on a handle to scrub an unpainted porch.

From Barbara Church, Alleghany County

... A big Saturday night date was sitting on the porch in the moonlight listening to the "Grand Ol' Opry" on the radio through an open window.

... You had to start a fire in the woodstove to thaw water for making coffee.

From Vickie Blue, Cameron

... You learned how to use molasses when the sugar you got with ration stamps ran out.

... You ate the same food for breakfast, lunch and supper.

... You wore cardboard for insoles in your shoes.

From Vivian Watts, Garland

... You know who Homer Briarhopper is and watched his program every morning at 6.

... Homer Briarhopper ran out of gas in front of your house one time and churned your homemade ice cream while you went to town to get a can full of gas. You yourself were a local celebrity for a month after that.

... Your grandparents would say "hen town!" or "drat!" instead of swear words.

... Your Granny kept a fire and plenty of sweet potatoes in the fireplace, and you thought yourself rich to pull one from the fire with a poker, wipe off the ashes, slice it down the middle and put butter on it.

... You remember when syrup came in a can and was so thick it would stay on a fork.

From Rosita Jones, Dallas

... You looked forward to August and Big Meetin' time (revival).

... You know what riding in the rumble seat means.

... When company came, you kids took note of your behavior or words if you heard Mama clear her throat and look in your direction.

From Bob Comer, Statesville

... You remember when and where you drank your first Pepsi, the first time you tasted and liked eastern Carolina barbeque, your first steak ordered in a restaurant, and the good meals at Mrs. Todd's Boarding House.

From Gene Clemmer, Bessemer City

... You know what Mama Peg and Peggy are.

... You know what a pressing club is.

... You have played Ring-a-Le-Bow.

... You know someone who is sharp as a briar.

... You know how hard it is to dig a 4-by-4-by-6 outhouse hole in red clay.

... You get a whuppin' in school and don't let your daddy find out.

From Jill Lambert, Lexington

... You can see someone that looks like Elvis jogging down the road on your way to get ice cream and hot dogs at the country store.

... Your neighbors' second form of I.D. is the kind of dog they have. ("You know: the house with the three beagles in the front yard.")

... You can easily taste the difference between a scratch-made cake and a "homemade" cake from a box.

... You know what someone means when you're leaving their house, and they say, "Don't forget the old dog bed."

... The smell of fresh-milled lumber still seems sweet even after years of working in a saw room.

... You have risked your life trying to save a crazed emu.

From Worth Younts, Trinity

... As an elementary school pupil you saved all your dimes to help bring the USS North Carolina home.

... You played corncob ball all summer in the barnyard with your cousins Jerry, Johnny, Woody and Hob.

... You picked blackberries all day and scratched chigger bites all week.

... As a little kid you had to say a "speech" every year for the church Christmas pageant and you couldn't wait to be old enough to be a Wise Man and a Shepherd.

... You went to your aunt's house to play with your cousins and wound up having to help shell butterbeans all day.

... You hated to work in your parents' garden but now you can't understand why your kids hate helping in yours.

... One of your favorite singing groups was Homer and Jethro.

... Your grandma kept a fresh supply of country ham and homemade biscuits in her pie safe all year.

... One of your favorite days of the summer was when the Bookmobile came down your road.

... The one TV in the neighborhood was brought to your grandparents' house that night in March 1957 when all the neighbors gathered to watch the NCAA championship between Carolina and Kansas.

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on the bookshelf

Unspeakable

Junius Wilson (1908–2001) spent 76 years at a state mental hospital in Goldsboro, including six in the criminal ward. He wasn't declared insane by a medical professional nor found guilty of any criminal charge, but he was deaf and black in the Jim Crow South. Using legal records, institutional files, and extensive oral history interviews—some conducted in sign language—authors Susan Burch and Hannah Joyner piece together Wilson's story. A deaf man accused in 1925 of attempted rape, Wilson was found insane at a lunacy hearing, committed to the criminal ward of the State Hospital for the Colored Insane, castrated and forced to labor for the institution. Lawsuits led to his release in the 1990s, and he spent his final years in a cottage on hospital property. Hardcover, 320 pages, $27.50. Published by the University of North Carolina Press in Chapel Hill.

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The Pink Begonia Sister's Caribbean Retreat

Famous painter Mary Ruth, Annie Mae (recently released from prison) and Nancy Ree knew what they wanted until they turned 40 and were forced to deal with breast cancer. The novel "The Pink Begonia Sister's Caribbean Retreat" centers on these three women and emphasizes religious and Biblical themes, along with love, family, heritage and personal growth. Author Lisa Huggins Oxendine lives in the Union Chapel community of Robeson County and is a member of Lumbee River EMC. Softcover, 112 pages. Published by That I Might Enjoy Life Ministries in Lumberton. The book is available at select bookstores and through the author by sending a check or money order to Lisa Huggins Oxendine, 2007 Huggins Road, Lumberton, NC 28360. Each book is $12.95 each (that includes tax), plus $4 shipping and handling. For additional copies, add 50 cents each.

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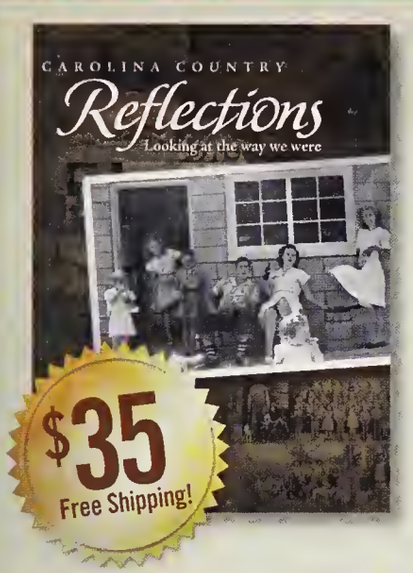

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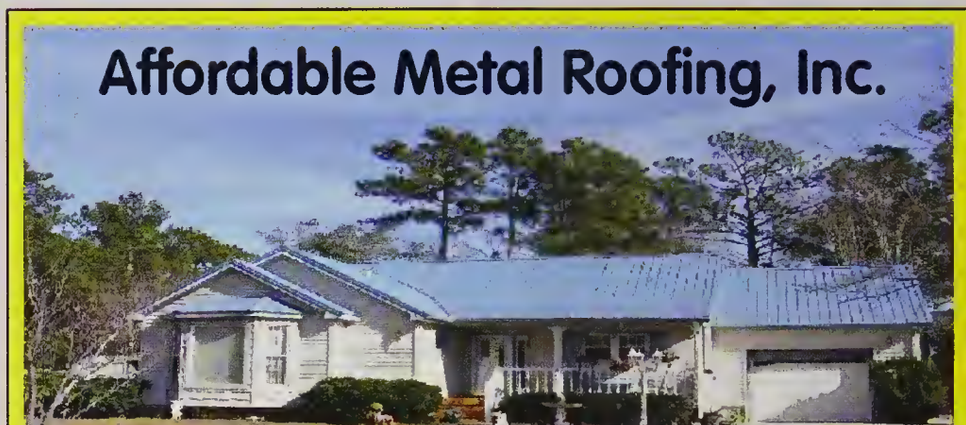

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Getting To Know...

Jerry Darnell Stackhouse

Born: November 5, 1974, in Kinston

Known for: NBA All-Star player. A fierce competitor, Stackhouse was the youngest of 11 children and grew up trying to imitate, and then outdo, his seven older brothers. An offensive threat, he has the ability to score from a variety of spots on the floor. Stackhouse eats gummy bears before every game, a tradition his mother started when he was in high school.

Accomplishments: Stackhouse played memorable basketball at Kinston High School, scoring a total of 2,039 in only three seasons. His highest scoring game of 43 points came against Wilson High School. He transferred to Oak Hill Academy near Roanoke, Va., his senior year, and there made a school-record 65 three-pointers. Jerry's Oak Hill team went 30–0 and won the mythical high school national championship. During college at UNC-Chapel Hill, he enjoyed two outstanding seasons and was named First Team All-American by the Associated Press, College Player of the Year by Sports Illustrated and Most Outstanding Player of the Southeast Regional in the 1995 NCAA Tournament. Stackhouse left UNC-Chapel Hill after his sophomore year and was selected third overall in the 1995 NBA Draft by the Philadelphia 76ers. He went on to play for the Detroit Pistons, Washington Wizards and Dallas Mavericks, where he serves as a high-scoring sixth man. His community service endeavors include the American Diabetes Association, Children's Miracle Network, American Cancer Society and the Boys and Girls Club. He has a bachelor's degree in African American Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Field Trip Fun

THE HISTORY PLACE

At the History Place, located in Morehead City, you can visit an old general store, an early schoolroom, Victorian parlor and doctor's office. The museum displays an interesting array of Carteret County artifacts such as vintage clothing, period furniture, military memorabilia, artwork, glassware and Native American items.

Its collection of items from local families include an antique wheelchair made of wood with a cane back, a table model wind-up Victrola that plays 78 rpm records, and a scale model of the CSS Alabama and historic quilts and dolls. To understand the early days of Carteret County, there are displays of medical equipment, farming and fishing equipment, an 1880 spinning wheel, antique toys and decoys. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Call ahead for group tours. (252) 247-7533 or www.thehistoryplace.org

Valentine's Day customs

In the United States, we exchange cards, candy and flowers on Valentine's Day but traditions vary widely among countries. In Austria, young men give their beloved a bunch of flowers. In Denmark, people give poems and candy snowdrops. In Wales, they exchange wooden spoons. In Japan and Korea, women give chocolate to men they like. During the Civil War, valentines became popular. Cards for far-away soldiers were elaborate, trimmed with satin ribbons. During the space-age 1950s, heartfelt missives boasted rockets, spaceships and sayings such as "You're out of this world!"

A valentine (text right) found in the Carolina Playmakers Scrapbook, 1942, makes it clear that it was written during the war years.

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Sugar is rationed
How about you?

SURF IT!

www.nba.com
www.jerrystackhouse.com

For more about Valentine's Day traditions around the world,
http://www.stvalentinesday.org
http://www.stvalentines.net/traditions.htm

classroom chuckle

Teacher: Name two pronouns.

Student: Who, me?

Know a little-known fact about your town?

Or perhaps you've heard about an interesting person from North Carolina for our "Getting To Know" feature? Tell us! We want to hear your suggestions and comments. E-mail editor@carolinacountry.com or call (800) 662-8835, ext. 3036. Or write us at Carolina Country Tar Heel Lessons, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC, 27611.

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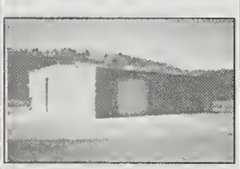

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—and he made all seven brides pregnant!
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THE BROTHERS CARRY MAs OFF.

UNSCRAMBLIT

There ain't no rules around here! We're trying to

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

pooidgnatr tidwhrale

Thomas Edison

Use the capital letters in the code clue below to fill in the blanks above.

"ACEGH ILM NOPTS" means power and light

Domi-Nos

L	M		I	A	4	E	V	T	L	N	N	Y	B	L
X	L		X	L									X	L
B	4	E	M	Y	V	A	L	4	E	N	T	I	N	4	E

Each letter stands for a digit in these multiplication problems. Repeated letters stand for repeated digits. Given E=4, can you replace the missing digits?

BOXED BUNCH

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

With the help of a computer program and a Scrabble Dictionary, Gerald Woodbury tells us by e-mail that he found 223 four-letter words in the "Boxed Bunch" puzzle that ran here in December. Wow! I found only 71, and readers sent in an additional 51 for a total of 122.

Country Music Lyrics for Truckers and All

As you travel down life's highway your load may not seem light.
And it may seem hard to follow that injunction to "keep right."
Just remember as you travel that we all must pay our tolls,
and the roads that we must travel may be pitted with potholes.
So beware of easy shortcuts that may tempt you from your road,
and in life, as on the highway, pull your share of the load.
Avoid the "easy" detours that tempt us all to roam,
and honor those ten signposts that will lead us safely home.

—*cgj*

What's In A Name

Just as you can spell out **rain** in **North Carolina**, you can spell out each of these words in the names of some of the other 49 states. Can you name the states? Letters must appear in their proper order, reading from left to right.

soul corn nut sand soak
wire mines plan lord work

For answers, please see page 42

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JOYNER'S CORNER ANSWERS:

Domi-No.s

2 7 x 2 = 5 4 3 8 x 2 = 7 6
L M x L = B E I A x L = M Y

4 9 1 2 0 0 6 5 2 x 2 = 9 8 2 4 0 1 3 0 4
E V T L N N Y B L x L = V A L E N T I N E

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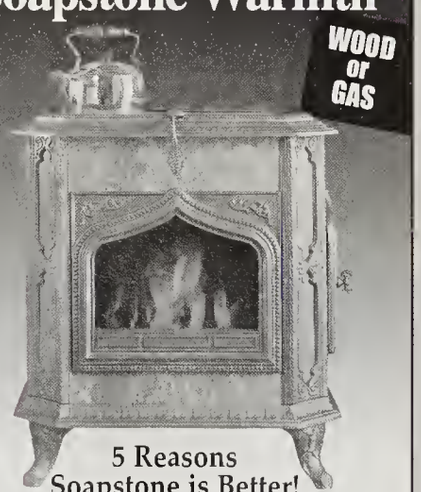

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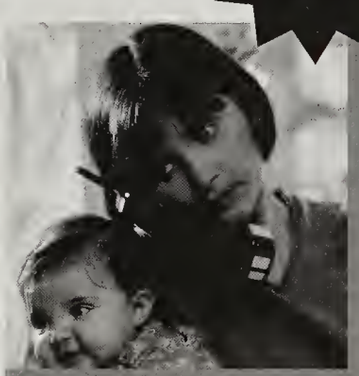

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$100,000	$591.54	30 YR. Fixed	5.87*	6.04%
$150,000	$887.31	30 YR. Fixed	5.87*	5.99%
$200,000	$1,104.41	5 YR ARM	5.25***	5.39%
$200,000	$666.50	Power Arm	1.25***	6.52%

* Fixed Rate conforming loans for70 LTV rate/term refinance/purchase transactions. **Interest Only home equity loan, 80 LTV. Interest only payments for up to 10 years. Principle payments can be made at any time without penalty. ***ARM loans for 70 LTV rate/term refinance/purchase transactions. Power Arm payment adjusts annually while rate adjusts monthly. All rates and terms subject to differ as market conditions change. Other Rates, Terms and Products available. Call about Cash Out, Debt Consolidation, JUMBO Loans and more.

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February Events

MOUNTAINS

Street Dances
Mondays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Will The Groundhog See His Shadow?
Feb. 2, Chimney Rock Park
(800) 277-9611
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Feminist Gloria Steinem: "Where Are We Going?"
Feb. 4, Boone
(828) 262-2683

Transactors Improv
Feb. 8, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787

The Guerrilla Divas (Vaudeville)
Feb. 9, Brevard
(828) 884-2787

Naked Tree ID Hike
Feb. 9, Chimney Rock Park
(800) 277-9611
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Too Human in Concert
Feb. 16, Brevard
(828) 884-2787

Chowan, Scott & Flynn in Concert
Feb. 16, Spindale
(828) 286-9990
www.foundationshows.org

PIEDMONT

Free Day at Cape Fear Botanical Garden
Feb. 1, Fayetteville
(910) 486-0221
www.capefearbg.org

Bold-Faced Liars' Showdown
Feb. 2, Laurinburg
(910) 291-0929
www.storyarts.info

WPAQ 60th Anniversary Celebration
Feb. 2, Mount Airy
(800) 286-6193
www.wpaq740.com

Pianists Elena Martin & Jose Meliton
Feb. 3, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1276

"The Producers" comedy
Feb. 4, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100
www.crowncoliseum.com

Rev. Joseph Lowery—Distinguished Speaker Series
Feb. 5, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1474

Traveling Film Festival
Feb. 7, Clayton
(919) 553-1930
www.theclaytoncenter.com

Dance 2008
Feb. 7–12, Greenville
(252) 328-6829
www.theatre-dance.ecu.edu

"Back of the Big House"—Daily Lives of Slaves
Feb. 9, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

A Victorian Valentine
Feb. 14, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Black History Celebration
Feb. 15, Mount Airy
(800) 286-6193
www.surryarts.org

Round Peak Ramblers in Concert
Feb. 16, Mount Airy
(800) 286-6193
www.surryarts.org

Romantic Masterpieces
Feb. 16, Fayetteville
(910) 433-4690
www.fayettevillesymphony.org

NWTF Hunting Heritage Banquet
Feb. 16, Wingate
(704) 624-2993

Rhodora Chamber Players
Feb. 17, Statesville
(704) 878-0743

"Pinnochio"
Feb. 21–22, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1724

Tommy Jarrell Festival
Feb. 28–March 1, Mount Airy
(800) 286-6193
www.surryarts.org

Jam Downtown
Feb. 29, Mount Airy
(800) 286-6193
www.surryarts.org

Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School
Feb. 29, Roxboro
(919) 603-1350

COAST

Carolina Chocolate Festival
Feb. 1–3, Morehead City
(877) 848-4976
www.carolinachocolatefestival.com

Attic-Basement-Closet Sale
Feb. 2, New Bern
(252) 638-8558
www.newbernhistorical.org

Wildlife Arts Festival
Feb. 8–10, Washington
(252) 946-2897
www.eastcarolinawildfowlguild.com

Artisan Valentine Jewelry Show
Feb. 2, Washington
(252) 946-6208
www.theblindcenter.org

East Carolina Symphony Orchestra
Feb. 9, Bayboro
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Oyster Feast
Feb. 9, Stumpy Point
(252) 473-5869

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Jivamukti Yoga Retreat & Workshop
Feb. 16–17, Hatteras Island
(252) 995-3125

Freedmen's Colony Celebration with Kal David
Feb. 22–24, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Old Ford VFD Survivor Rodeo
Feb. 22–23, Williamston
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PIEDMONT

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Ongoing, Charlotte
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www.charlottemuseum.org

Flag Journey to North & South Pole
Ongoing, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottemuseum.org

Vantage Point VIII: Jiha Moon Paintings
Feb. 2–July 6, Charlotte
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseums.org

Chamber Music of Charlotte
Feb. 10, Charlotte
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseums.org

American Cut Glass
Feb. 16, Charlotte
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseums.org

A Day in the Park: Thread Poems
Feb. 16, Charlotte
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseums.org

"The Belle of Amherst"— Play about Emily Dickinson
Through Feb. 17, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186

"Everybody's War: NC and World War II"
Through Feb. 17, Raleigh
(919) 807-7943
www.ncculture.com

Fiberart International
Through Feb. 2008, Charlotte
(704) 337-2009

Unbinding Beauty Artworks
Through March 9, Fayetteville
(910) 485-5131
www.fayettevillemuseumart.org

Made in China: Porcelain
Through April 20, Charlotte
(704) 337-2000

Call to Duty
Through April Fort Bragg
(910) 432-3443
www.bragg.army.mil/18abn/museums.htm

Phantasmagoria: Specters of Absence
Feb. 8–April 26, Charlotte
(704) 332-5535
www.mccollcenter.org

White Light: Glass Compositions
Through May 25, Charlotte
(704) 337-2009

North Carolina in American Revolution
Through June 2008, Raleigh
(919) 807-7900
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Back By Popular Demand/ Favorite Artifacts
Through August 2008, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

COAST

History, Arts & Fun
Feb. 18–29, Roanoke Island Festival Park
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www.roanokeisland.com

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Deadlines:
For April: Feb. 24
For May: March 24

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www.duplintourism.org

Have you ever seen a twibil? Or a sugar nipper? If not, you can learn about them in Duplin. The county has kept its agricultural heritage while allowing for growth, and it offers intriguing glimpses of old-time farm life. In Kenansville, the county seat, you can take a walking tour of 25 historic buildings. Locals enjoy quaint Country Squire Restaurant, between Kenansville and Warsaw, where waitresses serve up relish trays and steaks. The towns of Warsaw, Wallace, Teachey, Rose Hill, Magnolia, Faison and Calypso developed along railroad tracks and are easily accessed off I-40. Wallace recently renovated its historic train depot, which houses an arts and crafts guild, transportation museum, farmers market and its Chamber of Commerce, and diners enjoy hobnobbing at The Mad Boar Restaurant. In Rose Hill, cooks can fry 365 chickens at once. The town square displays the "World's Largest Frying Pan" —a sizzle worth seeing. Nearby, Duplin Winery pours samples at its 40-foot tasting bar. Once labeled "the factory of liquid sin," it offers daily tours and a dinner show. Warsaw has a nice veteran's museum, housed in a restored Queen Anne house. As for the twibil and sugar nipper? Visit Cowan Museum in Kenansville.

Three top spots:

Liberty Hall Plantation: This tour of a restored Southern plantation in Kenansville shows rooms and dependencies (support buildings), including a garden shop, carriage house, servants quarters, smokehouse, overseer's cottage and tool house. Admission. (910) 296-2175 or www.libertyhallnc.org.

Tarkil Branch Farm Homestead Museum: This restored 1830s homestead in Beulaville includes a 1925 country store, smokehouse and old farm equipment on the working farm. Wagon tours and a hiking trail. No fee for children under 10. (910) 298-3804 or www.tarkilfarmsmuseum.com.

Cabin Lake: About five miles north of Beulaville on Highway 111, the 160-plus acre park offers camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing and swimming (summer only). $3 per person; free for children 5 and under. (910) 298-3648.

Duplin County Tourism

A gazebo graces gardens at Liberty Hall Plantation in Kenansville.

By Carla Burgess

Germinating a garden blog

Like many gardeners, I take lots of photos of my plants. Ideally, I'd write down interesting observations and create an illustrated scrapbook or notebook with photo captions. I might even include my before-and-after photographs. Trouble is, once I take the "after" photo, I invariably have a hard time locating the "before" one. And though my intentions are good, the typed musings in my word processing files and the digital photos stored on my computer rarely mingle. I've recently discovered how a blog, or Web-based journal, can be a simple (and free) solution to this problem. Though Internet blogs are mostly viewed as public forums through which individuals reveal themselves to the online world, blogs can also be a relatively private way to organize and store information about your garden. Many blog hosting sites provide templates that are easy to use, and you can set up your account and blog in a matter of minutes. Your blog entries are automatically dated and archived, plus you can organize them using keywords. There's no guarantee that your journal will be completely sequestered, but you can limit access by inviting only the people you wish to view it. And if you're using it merely for arranging data, do you really care if a stranger discovers what year you planted your pink hydrangea? However, be warned. Once you start uploading your photos and writing creatively about the bluebirds feasting on your dogwood berries, your fledgling pride may tempt you to share your blog with others.

By chance, I stumbled upon the blog of David Whitehead, a Greensboro gardener whose witty prose and beautiful photos inspire strangers to become friends. The 1-year-old blog began, modestly enough, as an electronic filing cabinet. But now it's his bridge to gardeners everywhere. "We share advice, complain about the weather, recommend plants, offer moral support, and just enjoy reading about each other's gardens," he says. To host his site, Whitehead chose Blogger.com for its ease of use, lack of fees and ads and large amount of file space for content and photos. To investigate the variety of choices for creating your own blog, try typing a phrase such as "free blog hosting" into a search engine.

Forsythias for flower and foliage

The standard forsythia is the belle of the ball in spring, with its bold burst of yellow flowers. But it can be boring the rest of the year, hogging the dance floor with somewhat humdrum foliage. Varieties with variegated leaves keep the party going after their blooms fade. 'Fiesta' is a compact forsythia (about 3 feet tall to 4 feet wide) whose green leaves have buttery-yellow centers. The leaves of 'Golden Times' have green centers trimmed in bright yellow. The variety known as 'Kumson' could easily have been named 'Wow'. Sporting dark green leaves with a dramatic network of white veins, it would turn heads even if it never flowered. Plant it in a semi-shady location and prepare for the paparazzi.

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A Gardener's Notebook from Greensboro, NC
THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2008
Save the Planet and Improve My Garden
I heard a story on the radio today about these things called "carbon offsets." The way it works is, you figure out how much carbon dioxide you are responsible for spewing into the atmosphere and buy an "offset" from a carbon broker who assures you that your money goes toward some project that will reduce greenhouse gases by that amount.
One of the projects is planting trees.
Why didn't I think of this before? Like an idiot, I've been working three jobs to earn money for plants (plus incidentals like food and mortgage payments) when I could be charging money for the privilege of buying shrubs for my garden...er...the "project site.". (I don't really need any more trees, but I'm pretty sure that Viburnums and Beautyberries absorb carbon dioxide too.)
Now, how do I set up a Paypal account?
Posted by David in Greensboro, NC at 9:47 PM
Links to this post
5 comments
MONDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2007
DAVID WHITEHEAD
View my complete profile
If we persist, I do not doubt that by age 96 or so we will all have gardens we are pleased with, more or less.
Henry Mitchell
Daily Photos from Greensboro
Slideshow

David Whitehead of Greensboro began his Web-based journal or "blog" as an electronic filing cabinet. Now it's his bridge to gardeners everywhere.

Modern heirlooms

Gardeners looking for the new often find it in the old. Seed Savers Exchange, for example, lists three new edible selections in its 2008 catalog. But how can the sweet, heavy-fruited muskmelon called 'Healy's Pride', first grown in Illinois in 1952 by Elmer James Healy, be new? Because until now, it was lost to the commercial seed trade. By relocating and reclaiming long-forgotton seed varieties, SSE places many old-timey favorites into the hands of modern gardeners. Other new oldies in the catalog include 'Japanese Trifele Black Tomato', which has a rich, full flavor and dark skin purported to rarely crack, and the sweet, crisp 'Bull Nose Bell Pepper', grown by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. SSE's seeds are sold only to members, who support the nonprofit organization and its seed preservation work through an annual membership fee of $35. Each year, members have access to more than 11,000 rare varieties of vegetables, fruits and grains. For more information, visit www.seedsavers.org, or write to 3094 North Winn Road, Decorah, IA 52101.

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Carla Burgess can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com.

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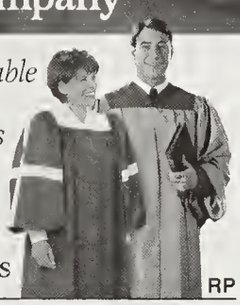

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TOUGH CLEAN, EARTH FRIENDLY

By James Dulley

Options for bathroom remodeling

When remodeling a bathroom, invest in features that will save you money in addition to looking good.

Using several bathrooms in a home accounts for a significant amount of your utility bills year-round. Bathrooms use both hot and cold water, heating and cooling, and electricity for lighting and appliances. With whirlpools and other comfort appliances, bathrooms are used for more hours today than ever before. Here are things to consider when remodeling or upgrading:

Since people normally associate a bathroom with water usage, let's start there. Flushing toilets is the major cold water consumer in most bathrooms, and the toilet typically is replaced when remodeling. During the winter, all of the cold water that comes indoors when the toilet is flushed draws heat from the house as the water in the tank warms up. This can be a significant hidden energy loss.

The maximum water usage allowed for new toilets is 1.6 gpf (gallons per flush), and most toilets use this maximum. Several of the major plumbing fixture manufacturers now offer super-efficient standard-flush toilets that use less water. Since not as many of these super-efficient toilet styles are available, select the toilet first and match the other fixtures to it.

The type of showerhead impacts both the amount of cold and hot water consumed. There are maximum water flow rates for showerheads. Large shower units with multiple heads use more water, though. If you have tried older low-flow showerheads in the past and were dissatisfied, the new ones provide a more forceful shower. Select a showerhead that has a tickle valve to slow the water flow while you are lathering. The main knob on some massaging showerheads also can be adjusted to just a trickle.

Much hot and cold water is wasted trying to get the shower water temperature where you want it. Manual and electronic shower valves are available that allow the temperature to be set on a dial or digitally. The correct temperature is reached quicker and less water is wasted down the drain. Some may also allow you to reduce the water flow without changing the water temperature.

If it takes a long time to get hot water to the shower or sink, install a rapid hot water demand kit underneath the sink. When you need hot water, it draws hot water quickly to the faucet. Instead of the cold water being wasted down the drain while waiting, it flows back to the water heater tank. In addition to saving water, it saves energy because less incoming cold water has to be heated. Also, the hot water gets to the faucet quickly, so less heat energy is lost from the plumbing inside the walls and floors.

Bathroom heating is another energy consideration because you want the heat quickly, but for only a short period of time. An electric radiant system can make you feel comfortably warm without having to heat all the air in the bathroom. This feels similar to standing outdoors in the direct sun on a cold day. The air is cold, but the radiant heat warms your body quickly.

Electric radiant floor or wall heating is an option. Radiant wall heating panels warm and produce heat quickly so they are ideal for unplanned times in the bathroom. Electric in-floor radiant heat is very comfortable for a bathroom. Since it takes somewhat longer to warm up, put it on a timer for typical bathroom usage times. Overhead radiant bulbs also provide spot heating quickly.

A high-quality bathroom vent fan with humidity- or motion-sensing controls is most efficient. It runs only as long as it is actually needed so excessive heated air (winter) or cooled air (summer) is not being sucked from your house. The newest, most quiet ones often require a larger duct so you may have to alter the vent pipe in the attic to accommodate one. They also minimize air leakage when the fan is not running.

Select a vent fan with a light fixture and install full-spectrum compact fluorescent bulbs. These are energy efficient and produce natural light for applying makeup. A vent fan with a built-in night-light is good for a child's bathroom.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, c/o Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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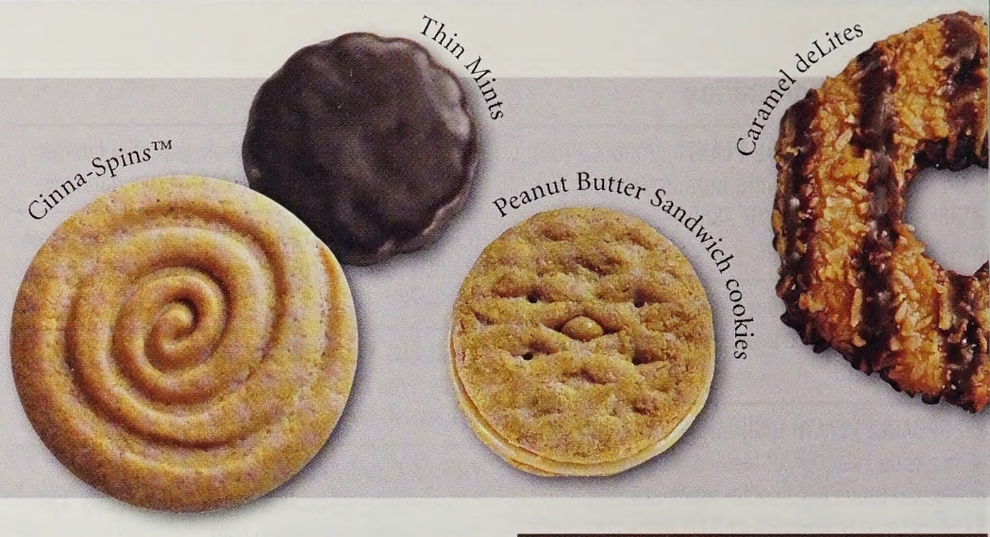
It's Girl Scout Cookie Time!

Girl Scout cookie sales season is under way and will continue in most places into April. Check with your local Girl Scout Council about how you can buy them. The activity helps Girl Scouts and Brownies learn customer service and money management skills and benefits local scouting activities. The recipes here come from The Girl Scouts licensed bakers, ABC/Interbake and Little Brownie Bakers.



Mini-Grasshopper Cheesecakes

- 12 Girl Scout Thin Mint cookies
- 2 packages cream cheese (8-ounce), softened
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon mint flavoring
- 2 eggs
- 3 drops green food coloring

Line muffin tin with paper liners; place one cookie in each liner. Mix cream cheese, mint flavoring and sugar at medium speed until well blended. Add eggs and food coloring; mix well. Pour over cookies, filling ¾'s full. Bake 25 minutes at 325 degrees F. Remove from pan when cool.

Apple-Peanut-Oatmeal Crisp

- 1 can pie-ready sliced apples
- 1 stick butter
- 2 cups chopped Girl Scout Peanut Butter Sandwich cookies

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch square pan. Drain apples well and arrange in the pan. Melt butter in medium-sized saucepan and stir in chopped cookies until well mixed. Top apple slices with butter-cookie mixture. Bake about 30 minutes, or until crumbs are golden brown and apples are soft.

Carrot-Cinnamon Cupcakes

Cake

- 1 box (18-ounce) carrot cake mix
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 can (8-ounce) crushed pineapple in juice, undrained
- 16 Cinna-Spins™ Girl Scout cookies, coarsely crumbled

Frosting

- ½ cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 package (12-ounce) cream cheese, softened
- 1 package (16-ounce) powdered sugar
- 1½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tube orange decorating gel or icing
- Flaked coconut tinted with green food coloring
- 24 Cinna-Spins™, crumbled

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line cupcake pans with paper baking cups. In large bowl, beat cake mix, orange juice, oil, eggs and pineapple on low speed for 30 seconds. Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes. Stir in Cinna-Spins™ crumbles and coconut. Fill each cup ⅔ full (an ice cream scoop works well). Bake 16 to 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes. Remove from pan to cooling rack. Cool completely.

To make frosting, beat butter and cream cheese at medium speed with a mixer until creamy. Add powdered sugar and vanilla; beat at low speed to combine. Beat on high speed 10 seconds or until smooth. Spread about 2 tablespoons frosting on top of each cupcake. Sprinkle Cinna-Spins™ crumbles on top of frosting. With orange decorating gel make zig-zag carrot design in center of each cupcake. Sprinkle green-colored coconut at top of each carrot. Store in refrigerator.

Yield: 24 cupcakes

Winning reader recipe

Love Bites

- 1 cup vanilla wafer crumbs
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- ½ cup finely chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ cup drained maraschino cherries, chopped
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- ½ teaspoon water
- Red colored sugar (granulated sugar with red food coloring)

In a large bowl, mix vanilla wafer crumbs, powdered sugar, walnuts and cocoa powder. Stir in cherries and corn syrup until well mixed. Sprinkle with water and mix thoroughly until well blended, using hands if necessary. Shape mixture into ¾ inch balls. Roll balls in colored sugar. Store in an airtight container overnight before serving.

Pat Jackson of Rutherford EMC in Mill Spring will receive $25 for submitting this recipe.

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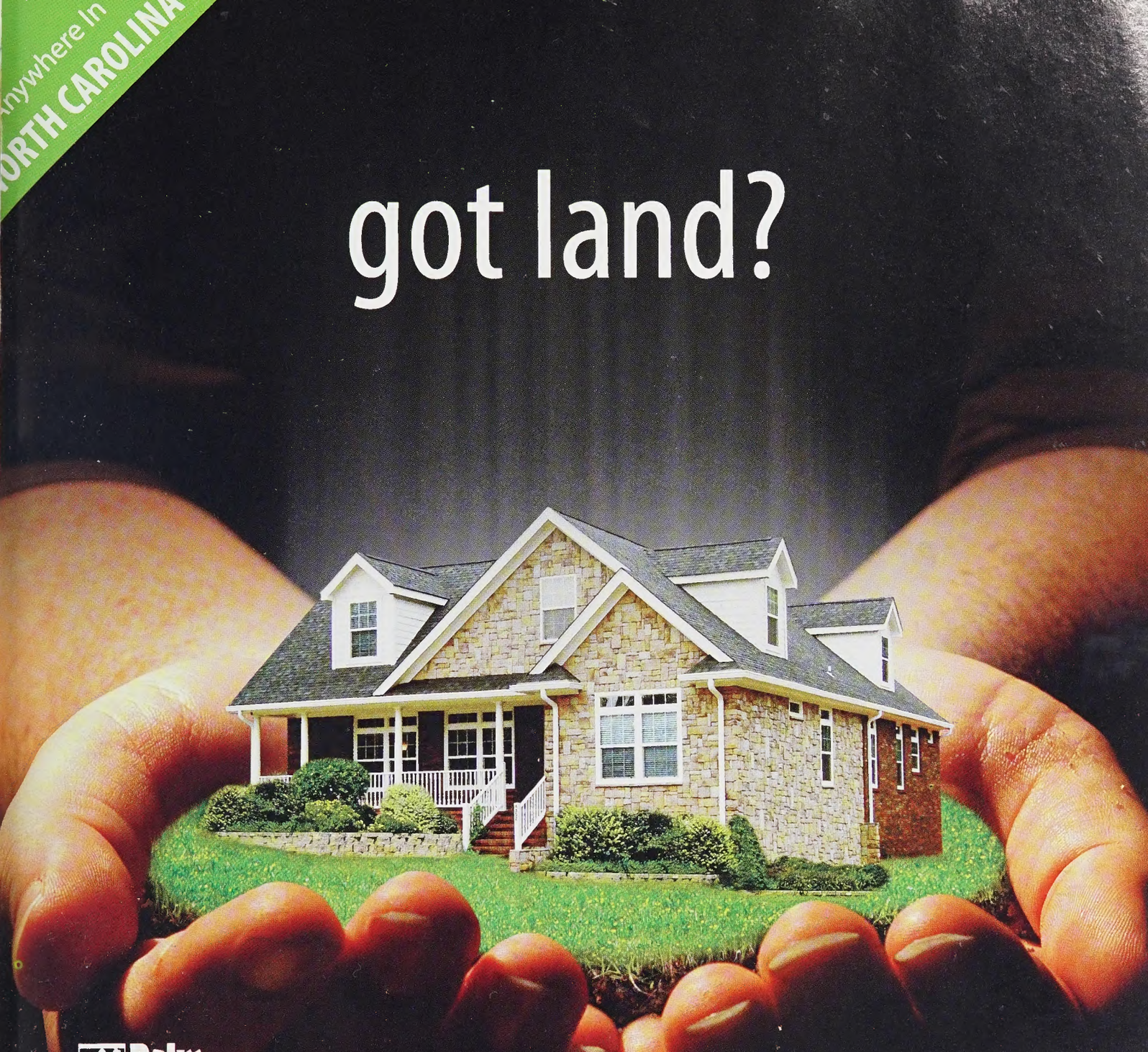

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